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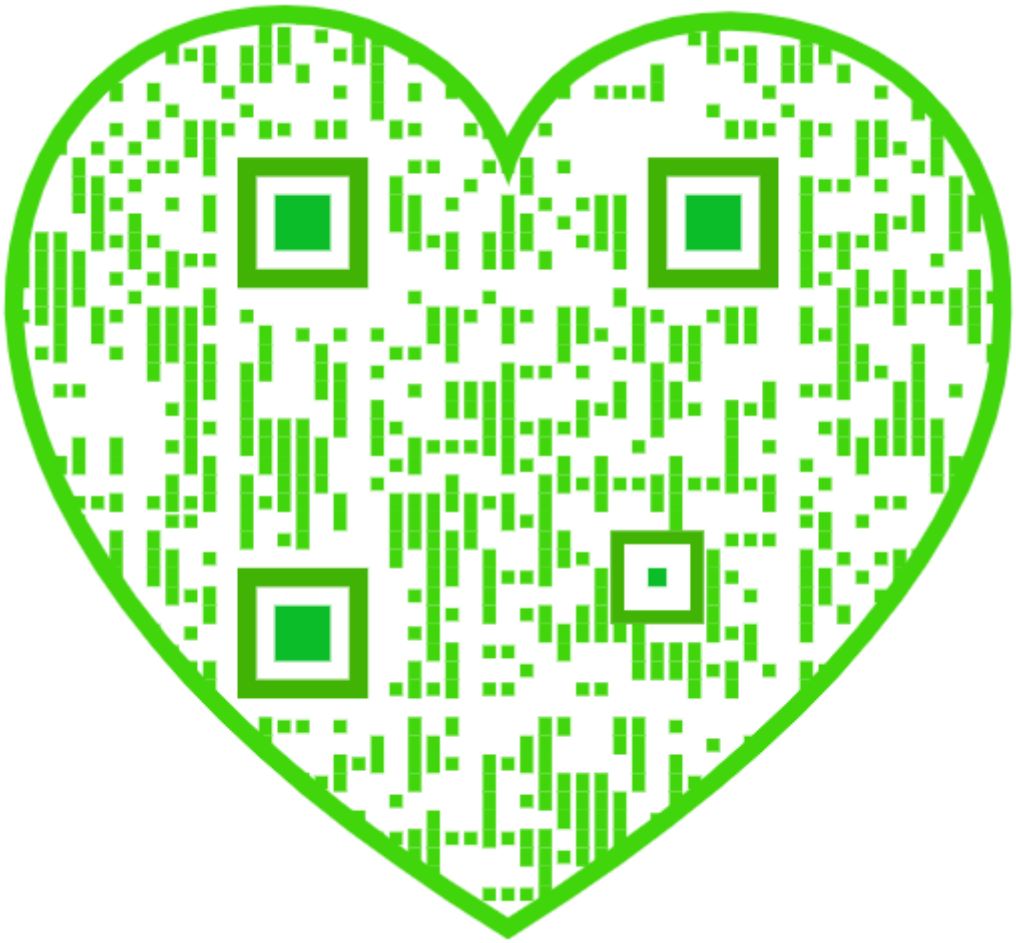

SUGGESTIONS

FOR

Dressmakers.

TAI. "You bid me make it orderly and well,
According to the fashion and the time."

PET. "Marry, and did; but if you be remember'd,
I did not bid you mar it to the time."

The Taming of the Shrew, Act IV. Sc. III.

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To the Dressmakers of America.

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS DEDICATED TO YOU WITH THE PERMISSION OF SO MANY OF YOUR NUMBER, THAT THE AUTHOR IS ENCOURAGED TO HOPE, THAT ALL MAY DISCOVER WITHIN ITS PAGES, SUCH ASSISTANCE IN THEIR PROFESSION, AS WILL AT LEAST, GUARANTEE THE WISDOM OF ATTEMPTING TO SUPPLY WHAT HAS HITHERTO BEEN DECLARED AN IMPRACTICABILITY, NAMELY—A TEXT BOOK FOR DRESSMAKERS.

THE FOLLOWING PAGES MAKE NO PRETENSIONS TO COVER THE GROUND. THEY ARE DESIGNED MERELY TO SURVEY IT AND TO REGISTER THE CONVICTIONS OF THOSE WHO HAVE THE INTERESTS OF DRESSMAKERS AT HEART, THAT THERE IS NO VALID REASON WHY THEY SHOULD NOT BE ABLE TO TURN IN MANY DIRECTIONS AND FIND INSPIRATION AND HELP, INSTEAD OF, AS NOW, FINDING EVERY HAND ARRAYED AGAINST THEM; FROM THAT OF THE WOMAN WHO EMPLOYS THEM, TO THE SHOPKEEPER WHO SELLS READY-MADE GARMENTS, AND, MOST DISHEARTENING FACT OF ALL, THE HAND OF EVERY MEMBER OF THEIR OWN PROFESSION.

DRESSMAKERS ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF MODERN LIFE. CIVILIZATION CAN BE IMAGINED, THAT SHALL BE SO IDEALIZED THAT MANY PROFESSIONS CAN BE DONE AWAY WITH. WE MAY SOME DAY BECOME SO HYGIENIC, PHYSICIANS WILL BE UNNECESSARY. WE MAY GROW SO PACIFIC, LAWYERS WILL NOT BE ESSENTIAL TO THE LIFE OF THE COUNTRY. BY THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALTRUISTIC TENDENCIES. PREACHERS MAY FIND THEIR PROVINCES ANNIHILATED. BUT SO LONG AS HUMAN NATURE ENDURES, THE DRESSMAKER MUST ABIDE. HER POSITION BEING A PERMANENT ONE, IS IT NOT TIME THAT HER PROFESSION SHOULD BEGIN TO WORK IN HARMONY?

PROBABLY NO BODY OF WOMEN ANYWHERE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED SO MUCH, WITH SO LITTLE HELP, AS HAVE THE AMERICAN DRESSMAKERS. THEY HAVE HAD THE FAMOUS DRESS ESTABLISHMENTS OF EUROPE FOR COMPETITORS. THEY HAVE HAD NONE OF THE ASSISTANCE FROM BOOKS OR WRITERS OR PREACHERS, AVAILABLE FOR ALL OTHER PROFESSIONS. THEY HAVE FOUND MEMBERS OF THEIR OWN PROFESSION, READY TO CUT PRICES AND LOWER STANDARDS, BUT

NO TWO OF THEM READY TO JOIN HANDS, TO EQUALIZE WORK AND REMUNERATION, AND DIGNIFY THE CALLING. LOUD VOICED AND NARROW-MINDED PEOPLE DECRY THE ART OF DRESS AND IN THE SAME BREATH THEY ALLOW THE VIRTUES AND BEAUTIES OF PICTURES AND STATUES. AGAINST OBSTACLES ON ALL SIDES, THE AMERICAN DRESSMAKER HAS WON A NAME AND FAME FOR HERSELF, WHEN, BESIDE HER TALENT, SHE HAS HAD THE PLUCK AND STRENGTH TO ENDURE. MANY WHO HAVE THE TALENT SUFFER FOR OPPORTUNITY TO EDUCATE IT, AND FOR LACK OF ASSISTANCE AND SYMPATHY TO NOURISH IT, AND SPEND LONGER OR SHORTER LIVES IN CEASELESS TOIL FOR WANT OF A FRIENDLY HAND, WHICH, IF THEY COULD BUT GRASP FOR THEMSELVES, THEY WOULD BE GLAD TO PASS ALONG TO OTHERS.

IS NOT THE TIME RIPE FOR DRESSMAKERS TO ASSERT THEIR RIGHTS, TO BE RECOGNIZED AS OTHER BODIES OF WORKERS ALL OVER THE LAND ARE RECOGNIZED? IT SEEMS SO TO THE AUTHOR AND TO THE PUBLISHERS OF THESE PAGES WHO OFFER THE SUGGESTIONS CONTAINED IN THE SUBJOINED CHAPTERS WITH THE AMBITION TO HELP DRESSMAKERS WHO NEED HELP TO HELP THEMSELVES. AND TO EMPHASIZE, IF POSSIBLE, THE VALUE OF THE WORK DONE BY THE MEMBERS OF A MUCH ABUSED PROFESSION THAT HAS ACCOMPLISHED WONDERS AND HAS WONDERS YET TO COMPASS.

PREFACE.

CONSIDERING THAT DRESS AFFECTS EVERY WOMAN IN EVERY CIVILIZED AND SEMI-CIVILIZED COUNTRY ON THE FACE OF THE GLOBE, THERE IS A CURIOUS LACK OF LITERATURE ON THE SUBJECT.

THERE IS NO LACK OF FASHION JOURNALS.

MANY OF THESE ARE VERY POOR, SOME ARE FAIR. ONLY A FEW ARE RELIABLE. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE DRESSMAKER TO SELECT OUT OF THESE A FEW THAT ARE MOST CORRECT. TO MAKE SURE THAT SHE HAS THE BEST SHE MUST MAKE A STUDY OF THE JOURNALS AND MAKE HER SELECTION ACCORDING TO HER BEST JUDGEMENT. IT MEANS MUCH TO THE DRESSMAKER THAT SHE SHALL HAVE ONLY THE BEST FASHION JOURNAL, THE ONE THAT GIVES HER STRICTLY *ORIGINAL DESIGNS* OF THE MOST FASHIONABLE AND ARTISTIC GRADE. THE TIME USED IN MAKING HER SELECTION IS WELL SPENT.

THE ONLY FASHION JOURNAL WORTH SUBSCRIBING TO, IS THE ONE THAT GETS ITS ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PARIS, NOT FROM FOREIGN PERIODICALS, BUT FROM THE ARTIST-DESIGNERS OF FASHIONS WHO DESIGN EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE JOURNALS IN QUESTION. IF THE DRESSMAKER VALUES HER REPUTATION AS A DRESSMAKER AND WISHES TO INCREASE HER INCOME SHE WILL PAY AS MUCH ATTENTION TO THE SELECTION OF HER FASHION JOURNAL AS THE DOCTOR DOES IN SELECTING HIS MEDICAL JOURNAL, AS THE LAWYER DOES IN SELECTING HIS LAW LIBRARY.

BUT EVEN THE BEST FASHION JOURNAL IS REQUIRED TO DEVOTE ITSELF TO THE FASHIONS OF THE DAY. IT PUBLISHES FROM ISSUE TO ISSUE MUCH THAT IS OF VALUE TO THE DRESSMAKER IN THE WAY OF HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS ABOUT CARRYING ON HER WORK, BUT IT IS MANIFESTLY IMPOSSIBLE TO REPEAT THESE IN EACH ISSUE. THE RESULT IS THAT THE NEW SUBSCRIBER OFTEN LOSES MUCH THAT THE OLD SUBSCRIBER HAS HAD THE BENEFIT OF LEARNING.

WHERE CAN THESE VALUABLE HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS BE FOUND?

THE DRESSMAKER WHO LOOKS UPON HER CALLING AS A PROFESSION AND WISHES TO RISE IN IT, BUT IS MORE OR LESS AT SEA HOW TO SET TO WORK TO DO SO, MAY LOOK IN LIBRARIES IN VAIN FOR INFORMATION THAT HAS ANY PRACTICAL, PERMANENT VALUE.

EVERY TRADE AND PROFESSION BUT THAT OF THE DRESSMAKER IS RICH IN BOOKS OF REFERENCE. IT CANNOT BE THE EPHEMERAL NATURE OF FASHIONS THAT PREVENTS SUCH HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS, BEING PENNED FOR THE DRESSMAKER'S GUIDANCE. FASHIONS THEMSELVES HAVE NOT CHANGED SO RADICALLY AS HAS THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY, OR MUCH OFTENER. NEW MEDICINES ARE INTRODUCED QUITE AS OFTEN AS NEW DRESSES, BUT FROM THE VERIEST TYRO TO THE MOST PROMINENT PHYSICIANS LIVING, THERE IS NO ONE OF THEM DESIRING ANY KIND OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE FROM THE DAYS OF AESCULAPIUS DOWN TO THE PRESENT TIME WHO CANNOT FIND IT FOR THE SEEKING. PERHAPS DRESSMAKERS ARE THEMSELVES TO BLAME.

DRESSMAKERS CATER TO MORE PEOPLE THAN THE FOLLOWERS OF ANY OTHER CALLING ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH, EXCEPT THE DEALERS IN FOODS. THEY CANNOT BE LESS DESERVING OF ATTENTION THAN THOSE WHO ARE BROUGHT INTO CONTACT WITH FEWER PEOPLE, AND WHOSE NEEDS ARE THEREFORE MORE LIMITED.

THE LAWYER CAN REFER TO ANY DISTINCTIVE CASE EVER TRIED IN THE COURTS OF THE WORLD, AND THUS GET "POINTERS" FOR TRYING HIS OWN, BUT THE DRESSMAKER WHO DOES NOT FIND OUT FOR HERSELF WHY SHE IS DRAGGING ALONG WITH A PITIFULLY SMALL AMOUNT OF CUSTOM, WHILE HER NEIGHBOR HAS MORE THAN SHE CAN DO, IS LEFT TO EAT HER BREAD WITHOUT BUTTER, WHILE DRESSMAKERS WITHOUT ABLER BRAINS, WARMER HEARTS, FINER FEELINGS OR TENDERER SYMPATHIES, THAN HERS, MAY HAVE A BOX AT THE OPERA, DINE ON SWEETBREADS AND HOT HOUSE GRAPES, SUBSCRIBE TO ALL THE CHARITIES, AND ESTABLISH A FUND FOR THEIR OLD AGE.

WHY?

SOMEWHERE DRESSMAKER NUMBER TWO, HAS LEARNED THE ART OF HER TRADE, WHILE NUMBER ONE IS GROPING IN VAIN TO FIND IT.

THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS HAVE BEEN WRITTEN IN ANSWER TO THE PERSONAL REQUESTS OF HUNDREDS OF READERS OF FASHION JOURNALS, FOR "SOMETHING IN BOOK FORM ABOUT DRESSMAKING" THAT WOULD HELP THEM TO ADVANCE IN THEIR WORK, INSTEAD OF STANDING STILL OR RETROGRADING. THAT THEY ARE SUPPOSED OFTEN TIMES TO RETROGRADE, NO ONE CAN DOUBT WHO RECALLS THE FREQUENT COMPLAINT THAT MRS. A. OR B. OR C. IS "GETTING TOO OLD TO BE A DRESSMAKER."

MRS. A. OR B. OR C. SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO BETTER WORK THE LONGER SHE IS IN THE PROFESSION, IT IS BECAUSE SHE DROPS BEHIND THE TIME, AND DRESSES YOUNG AND OLD ALIKE, AND MAKES GOWNS IN 1895 AS SHE DID IN 1875 THAT LESSENS HER FAME, NOT THE FACT OF HER YEARS.

THE MISSION UNDERTAKEN BY THIS LITTLE BOOK IS A MODEST ONE, IT IS NOT DESIGNED TO EXHAUST THE SUBJECT, IF IT TRIED TO DO SO, IT WOULD PROVE SO LONG THAT IT WOULD NEVER BE READ THROUGH. DRESSMAKING IS NOT A PROFESSION OF RULES BUT OF EXCEPTIONS, AND ONE BOOK COULD NOT CONTAIN THEM ALL. EVERY NEW FACE AND FIGURE INTRODUCES A NEW FEATURE IN DRESSMAKING, OR SHOULD, IT DOES TO THE MINDS OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL DRESSMAKERS.

IT IS MERELY A COLLECTION OF HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS THAT ARE SET DOWN IN THE ACCOMPANYING TALKS WITH DRESSMAKERS, HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS WHICH IT IS HOPED MAY PROVE TO BE HELPFUL TO SOME ONE SOMEWHERE, BY EMPHASIZING THE OPINIONS AND EXAMPLES OF THE DRESSMAKERS IN THE WORLD OF FASHION WHO ARE CAPTURING THE PRIZES OF FORTUNE AND FAME.

FORTUNE AND FAME SHOULD BE YOURS. THEY MAY BE IF YOU WILL WORK FOR THEM. WILL YOU?

NEW YORK, 1896.

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The Dressmaker.

THERE are dressmakers and dressmakers.

Between those who lack even mechanical skill and those whose "creations" are the talk and admiration of both hemispheres there are a great many grades. There are however but two classes, artists and artisans.

To inquire into and set forth simply some of the radical and distinguishing differences in the methods and results of the work of the two classes, with a view to practically assisting dressmakers everywhere to make the most of their capabilities is the purpose of a series of talks on the subject of which this is the initial number.

Whether one is an artist or an artisan in whatever she undertakes to do, whether it is to make a dress or lobby a bill through Congress, depends not only upon the dexterity with which she manipulates the actual tools of her craft, be they scissors or tongue—as so many apparently suppose—but upon all the faculties of the worker, and her power or lack of it, in employing them.

Certain queries suggest themselves at the outset to whomever gives a second thought to dressmaking. For example—Why can some dressmakers ask and receive four or six or ten times as much money for making a dress as some others get?

The reasons are a little way below the surface, but it pays to unearth them because they have to do with the very foundations of good and successful dressmaking. The investigation, if well conducted, and thoughtfully followed will answer the question not only so far as money is concerned, but will put into bold relief the reasons why one woman is ill-dressed in the exact duplicate of her well dressed neighbor's toilet.

The difference between Worth's fame and that of Miss Slimpkins of Jones' Corner may be merely a difference of opportunity. But the chances are that if Miss Slimpkins has never been heard of, it is because

her work bears the same relation to that of the famous artist, in dress that the frame made by the mechanic bears to the canvas painted by Raphael. This much is certain; every dressmaker whether in the city or backwoods has a chance to show what she can do with every gown she makes, and if Miss Slimpkins is an artist her fame will not long be compassed by the Corner. The late Mr. Worth was but a poor and uneducated apprentice when he was thirteen years old, but in his time he made gowns for every Queen of Europe except Victoria who cares nothing for good clothes.

The dressmaker who becomes famous, whose work is in demand long before that time, and who is always handsomely paid for it, is she (or he) who not only knows how to cut and fit and sew, but who uses this knowledge with a clear comprehension of the laws of beauty in dress. This comprehension is as much a part of her stock in trade as dressgoods. She weaves this wisdom into the lines of the gowns she makes, and through its decorations, and she sends in her bill accordingly. When she is paid it is not only in money, but in reputation.

The artisan on the other hand knows only the technical part of her trade, and this often but indifferently well. She gets her ideas from others, and often is not clever at appropriating them. Her services are all told when mention is made of the smaller or greater number of seams and ruffles that she puts into a gown. Her patrons pay her merely for the work of her hands, not for the insight of the artist, that puts a fine harmony into all her handiwork, for of this quality she has none.

True, the prestige of a long established reputation for being an excellent workwoman and artist combined, permits one to "pick and choose" her customers, from among the number that flock to her, and she can charge and receive larger prices than the unknown dressmaker can command, though the latter be equally accomplished.

But this prestige is an effect, not the cause of success. Merit in work tells its own story, and one that is not long in getting noised abroad. If one has the ambition to do work second to none, and the ability whether

still latent or already developed, to support such an ambition she can safely count upon sooner or later securing the highest market price for whatever she does, and the reputation to boot that brings her even more satisfaction.

Selection, Style, Color, Fitness, Economy—these all play important roles in dressmaking, and need to be considered, and to be considered wisely, and sympathetically, and just as conscientiously as the intricacies of Cutting, Fitting, Plaiting or Shirring.

The difference between the poor artisan dressmaker and the good artist dressmaker is not in their respective systems of draughting; it is a many-sided difference, but this generalization covers the ground; the poor dressmaker looks upon each dress as so much snipping and sewing; the good dressmaker views each gown that she makes as whole. She does not make one dress after another, without regard to anything but the size of the intended wearer, and copying the latest wrinkle of some French dressmaker. Instead, she considers each dress that she makes, no matter how simple it is to be, as a creation of itself, and not with regard to *any* woman, but with the strictest regard to one woman, her for whom it is intended. She studies her figure, her complexion, her needs-whether she can have a dress for every new function and needs a great many, or whether she must make one dress answer for a great many different occasions. The good dressmaker feels it incumbent upon her for the sake of her reputation, to give each of her customers the benefit of her supposedly superior judgement, and if she does this her fame spreads fast and far.

It isn't enough to advise me that I shall require so many yards of material for a dress when I ask for your assistance. If you make good your claim to understanding the art of dressmaking, you will be able to caution me against buying for my one best dress something that will look well only a few times, or something that will make me look less well than I might. You will counsel me not to insist upon having my flimsy summer silk made in the fashion selected by my friend for her heavy

broadcloth, and will know better than to permit me to clothe my short, stout, figure in a gown that is becoming only to a tall and slender ;woman.

If you have all this superior sort of wisdom anent clothes at your fingers' and tongue's end, and possess into the bargain the rest of the knowledge of dress-making that insures your tight-fitting bodices, fitting like wall paper, and your loose-fitting ones like the draperies of the old masters; that never fails to have your skirts hang well, and your sewing last while the garment does; if in short you make me and every other one of your customers look as well as it is possible for us to look, you will find in us the best possible advertising medium that you could have.

This is the grade of work turned out by the leading foreign dressmakers. It is the grade of work turned out by the rapidly increasing number of most admirable artists in dress in this country. It is the standard of work to aim at, for every one who aspires to be a leader in her profession whether her place of business is in New York City or some hamlet in Indian Territory.

An apprenticeship under an able teacher is an excellent school for one who feels her own shortcomings to be very many, but many of the leading dressmakers to-day have had few other instructors than their own ability after they passed the first stage, where they learned the bare rudiments of the trade. Some are entirely self taught. The ins and outs of dressmaking are many, but one can learn the ins by practice, and the outs by observation.

Object lessons are worth volumes of sermons. It is the best possible help to cultivate the art of seeing, and thinking about what one notices. If the fashion plate, the imported or native-made model, the women who pass one upon the street, or in the drawing room appeal to the artistic sense, discover the reason. Depend upon it that the pictures whether living, or stamped in colors upon paper, which are quite satisfactory are not alone those whose gowns are perfection as gowns, but those whose toilets are perfection from the view-point of the woman they adorn.

The inferior dressmaker's motto is, "anything so long as it looks like something."

The superior dressmaker aims not to copy slavishly, but to create.

There are dressmakers *and* dressmakers.

The poor dressmaker's lot, that of the artisan, is a thorny one and an unsatisfactory one, and a poorly paid one.

The lot of a good dressmaker, that of the artist, is not an easy one, but there is a vast deal of satisfaction in contemplating its achievements.

Dressmaking Systems.

"WHAT dressmaking system do you use?" Poor over worked and worn out question! What does it matter, any way? Use whichever one you like, that most readily assists you in getting good results. How find this? By experimenting. One dressmaker "swears by" a system that the next dressmaker you question will tell you is absolutely unreliable. And if you took the time and trouble as the writer has done, to carry the question the rounds of the dressmakers, you would find that of the almost infinite variety of systems" each has its stanch adherents, and that equally lovely creations in dress are turned out by those using totally different systems.

America, the country, is still old, but civilized America is young, and as a people we are still largely imitative. It is an excellent move on the part of you and me to profit all we can by the experience of others, but, in the end, we shall do nothing very great unless we do something orignal. By the amount of time spent in discussing dressmaking systems, it would seem that the cutting of a dress were all there were in it. In point of fact it is the least thing in the estimation of the famous dressmakers. Not that cutting is not an important factor in dressmaking; it is, of course, but it is one of the mechanical operations, and as such quite subservient in point of value, to the artistic knowledge that makes a "creation" of every dress, and a "vision" of the woman who wears it.

The fact that the majority of a dressmaker's patrons do not know whether they are well dressed or not, is not an excuse for some dressmakers who ask. "To what end, master the art of dressmaking, when all that the majority of the women care for is a dress à la mode, that fits well?" It is a mistake to think it is enough to know merely how to cut a dress so that it will turn out in the style of the day, that is, if one aspires to

be one of the leaders in ones' profession.

Elect for a cutting system, of course, one that answers your needs best, but do not exaggerate the importance of the cutting system. It is merely a stepping stone, not the goal.

What systems do the best dressmakers use in cutting?

Some of the leading cutters use no guide but their heads. They cut the lining for each dress bodice upon the figure. They throw a piece of slightly stiffened muslin over the shoulders, pin it here, and snip it there, and in a few minutes they have a lining guide of surprising accuracy. It looks easy. It is'nt. It is well enough for those accustomed to cut in this way to go on doing so, "letting well enough alone," but there is nothing in the method to commend it to one not already able to follow it.

All other cutting methods resolve themselves into cutting by chart, and cutting by paper patterns in working size.

The number of cutting charts, so-called tailor systems, draughting machines, etc., is large and constantly growing. Prices vary and so do the systems from a simple tape measure, and book of instructions, to complex formulas in the way of figuring, that none but students of the higher mathematics could possibly master in this life in time to make them useful. All are not equally valuable, indeed most of them are good for noting, all have their devoted followers, and those expert in evolving their several possibilities make by their aid absolutely perfect-fitting gowns.

All mathematical chart systems of cutting depend entirely for their practical merit upon the skill with which they are used. They are not automatic; they require to be operated by thinking heads and deft fingers. They are simply helps such as you get from your machine tape line and they supply, it must be remembered, no designs of themselves.

Those who are not apt at copying models from ideas carried in the head, or at designing garments outright

are reduced to the necessity of using paper patterns that give precise working models. These in common with the charts are many and each manufacturer claims and finds those who support his claims that his patterns are the best. You and I may chance to prefer the same or different patterns, but having found what you like, there is no reason to give yourself any uneasiness because I cut by a different system, providing the one you have gives you good results.

If the female form divine were absolutely perfect, then a good draughing system would be the cutting system par excellence so far as fitting a garment goes, because after the first measurements were accurately taken. That is, if it were possible to take exact measures. We claim that it is not. There would be no need to try on a bodice. But the cry does not go any farther in dressmaking than it does in many other things. The perfect figure is hard to find, and "trying on" is bound to continue to be thought one of the bug-a-boos of dressmaking. Then too, so long as every dressmaker cannot live in the full glare of the great fashion centres whence the "styles" radiate, and all dressmakers have not yet arrived at the point where they can evolve from their creative and artistic faculties, beautiful designs of their own, recourse must be had to the models of others. These are furnished in fashion plates for those who can draught their patterns having once caught the idea of the design, and in paper patterns for those who prefer working models.

It is buying experience too dearly to try each different make of paper pattern in turn, and run the risk of spoiling several frocks meanwhile. A simpler and better way is to pick out one make that promises to be among the best. How do this?

One way would be to compare the reigning modes as exhibited by the fashion leaders, and described by the fashion chroniclers, with the journal and designs issued by the paper pattern dealers and publishers. Note by a comparison of different books, which manufacturer puts out the handsomest and most artistic styles and is thus

most thoroughly up to date in catering to the great numbers of women who depend upon his guidance.

Patterns that keep pace with the march of fashion are bound to be new, and being new the chances are all in favor of their being in demand. If they are in demand they are supplied in large numbers, in a great variety of styles, and this means an able corps of workmen and women and the most approved methods of draughting the various portions of the pattern. Does it not stand to reason that the patterns of sucha manufacturer are vastly superior in style and fit to those of the maker who creeps along in the trail of fashion instead of running in the van?

No woman wishes a gown made in a fashion already in common use when the pattern maker selects it. Therefore pick out the design of the publisher who gets his inspiration, not at second or fifth hand from foreign journals printed after Paris dressmakers have started the styles around the world, but direct from the Parisian artist designers who create the styles. The patterns of such manufacturer give you and me the cream of the styles for any season before anybody else has them, and our gowns lead the fashion, competing with the oracles of that quivering heart of fashiondom—Paris—instead of copying designs that are months old before the inferior patterns of second rate manufacturers get round to them.

The dressmaker who creates all her own designs—she is a rarity in any part of the world.

No good dressmaker slavishly copies a model.

Do not make the mistake of measuring the width of a plait and its distance from the neck or foot of a dress in order to make it conform precisely to the pattern.

Get the best effect of the drapery or trimming regardless of whether it is just like the copy or not.

Paris dressmakers take great pains with the *tout ensemble* of their dresses; *i. e.* with the outlines and the general effect. They do not worry over details such as whether the strap goes under at the left side and out at the right, or vice versa, or trouble themselves about similar inconsequential matters over which American

dressmakers spend too much time.

As a matter of fact, the American dressmaker has spent much valuable time and hard earned cash in the past, on systems. She is now getting beyond the use of them and doing her work as the best French dressmaker does hers. They say in Paris;—"We do not cut dresses, we fit them," showing how little real importance they attach to cutting. Most dressmakers fail to realize the enormous amount of benefit derived from each fitting. Not only do you fit milady's dress well, but at the same time, unconsciously, you are learning all her individualities, and will, by the time you come to the trimming, know how to trim without giving it much study.

All of this time and a great deal more can be spent to real advantage in studying dress material and linings, and the proper linings for different materials, and in studying your customers.

Search out from whatever is fashionable that which is destined to make them look their best, and so rebound to your credit, both financially and as a matter of fame.

Fitting.

DRESS fitting is not a mathematical problem that can be solved by learning a few rules. Every new customer introduces another and frequently very refractory figure, making quite a different problem. There is no royal or easy road to learning to fit a dress. But the best all round guide post to follow is the one that directs the dressmaker to make herself mistress of the situation and let rules act as humble servants. Turn them and twist and manipulate them anyway, anyhow, to produce good effects whether anybody ever heard of doing the like before, or ever will again, or not. American dressmakers are famous for their devotion to arbitrary methods, fitting their customers to their theories, instead of subjugating theories to suit the customer's peculiar needs.

Parisian dressmakers on the other hand are famous for their pooh-poohing of systems. Instead of wasting their energies in following hard and fast theories they invest their ingenuity and talent in turning out original effects. Instead of studying systems they study their patrons. It is quite worth while to look at the Parisian methods, because Parisian dressmakers annually receive thousands upon thousands of dollars which American dressmakers ought to have, and which they will have-not so soon as they deserve them perhaps, but when they prove conclusively by their work, that they can outmatch the foreign-made gown at every point,

The Parisian dressmaker laughs at the American dressmaker, not without considerable excuse it must be admitted, for considering the fit of a dress its chief glory. To the Parisian mind the fit is merely a matter of course, the real success of the dress lying in its beautiful lines, charming combination of color, handsome texture, its success in enhancing the beauty of the figure and covering up its defects. The London

maker of riding habits prides himself upon the skin-fitting qualities of his work, but the Parisian modiste considers fit merely part of the skeleton of a dress, wholly subordinate to its decorative qualities.

The American dressmaker who has to be the tailor as well as the maker of ball gowns for her neighborhood has a distinctly harder task than the specialist who confines herself to one branch of the profession, say that of making girls' dresses, or morning apparel for adults, or dress suitable for sports, or merely tea gowns and dinner dresses and other resplendent frocks of their ilk. But the dressmaker who is called upon to make all manner of dresses will make it easier instead of harder for herself, if she learns to appreciate the Parisian point of view about dress, which is, that its chief aim to cover the body was long, long ago lost sight of in its recognized mission today—that of making the wearer look her best. The Parisian dressmaker does not care whether she takes your last sou or not, but she will not fit a gown to you if she considers the style unbecoming, though she loses your trade by her refusal.

When she has consented to make a dress for you she is autocratic to the last degree, but so polite and sauve in her autocracy, that you can but rejoice in her dominion over you.

Whether you are her best customer, or a chance rover upon the face of the earth whom she never expects to see again, she takes as much pains with your order as if her reputation hung upon that one dress. Yours may be the least important order she has, and she may not care a picayune for your few dollars, but she does'n't tell you so; and she does'n't say she is so rushed that she does'n't see how in the world she can make your dress, and thus forever after fill you with the feeling that it was but half made. Not she. If she takes your dress to make, she pools all her issues upon satisfying herself, and if she does this she is bound to satisfy you, because her taste is perfect.

Why perfect? Because she is forever studying to make it so. If the Parisian dressmaker requires your

presence for ten fittings, she tells you so and gets them. You may think three ought to answer, but, if she thinks ten, you give her ten, or she will not have any.

She thinks fitting merely a stepping stone to a fetching *ensemble*, but, if she sets out to make the dress fit, she fits, and she does it to perfection. Worth could'n't bear a plain, smooth, tight-fitting bodice and never made one if he could possible help it, but his linings fitted like the skin—not like paper on the wall, immovably tight, but like skin that is wrinkleless, but plays with every motion of the body.

The Parisian dressmaker will not fit over clumsy under-clothing, and her views on corsets ought to be adopted by every American woman. The average American woman today, if she does not live in the back woods, has her gloves and her boots fitted as carefully as a dress waist, but she continues, with comparatively few exceptions, to buy her corsets by a waist measure. The clever dressmaker knows that the majority of figures are corset built, that if the corset changes shape, so do the figures. It is, then, for her interest to have her dresses fitted over corsets that will keep their shape to the end of their days. No cheap corset will. It is starched into some sort of shape which never fits very well, Soon the stiffening lessens, and such shapeliness as the corset had, leaves it, with the result that the bodice which was fitted over it has, at the end of a few times wearing, quite a different figure to fit and, not being automatically adjustable, it ceases to fit and the dressmaker gets the blame.

The Parisian dressmaker will not fit a dress over a heavy stiff new corset; neither will a tailor who knows his business. They advise you to buy a corset without any stiffening, save that afforded by the bones and steels, and to have this fitted (which is done free at all first class houses) as carefully as you would have a glove fitted, to be sure that the bust fit is just right; that of the hips ditto; that the waist is neither too long nor too short; etc. This kind of a corset will fit as well when it is threadbare as when it is new, for the shape is in the

way it is cut, not in the starch of the cheap corset.

Another bit of work for the American dressmaker who means to pride herself upon having her dresses fit as well as they should, is to educate her American patrons up to having different corsets for different occasions. A Parisian dressmaker will not fit a ball gown over a corset suitable for a cloth street dress, and the smart London tailor assures Madam that she must have a pair of riding corsets to do his habit justice.

Nobody wishes to drive trade away to one's rivals but most women are more amenable to advice than they are credited with being, and the dressmaker who makes no mention of her point of view (that of not having her reputation as a dressmaker ruined) but urges the customer for the sake of her appearance to wear a light weight, pliable, well made, and accurately fitted corset, will find customers more than ready to take advantage of the advice.

The Parisian dressmaker and the London tailor *fit* their dresses. They do not pull them together and get the noticeable wrinkles out, and let them go at that. They do not make any attempt to fit carefully, till the bodice, when tried on, proves to be a pretty close fit in itself. Then the middle back seam is drawn in close to the neck well up; with the hands, the waist is *smoothed*, not jerked into place, and the fronts are pinned, not by lapping but by folding the edges together, as if to make a standing frill down the front. Many excellent dressmakers work down from the shoulders in fitting, but the best tailors work up from the waist line, and will tell you always to buttou coats, bodices, and all waists from the waist line up.

On a slender figure, the hems down the front will be practically straight, but the full bust must be accommodated by a curve, which makes itself when the fronts are drawn together and pinned. The bodices, today, nearly all have more or less fanciful fronts, the lining, fastening with hooks and eyes which merely bring the edges together without lapping. A bias facing is better

than a hem on bodices, where there is a curve over the bust, the line for the making of either being indicated when the fitting has been accomplished.

It is not a good idea to make more than the first trial fitting with the bodice wrong side out. There are scarcely two shoulders or two hips just alike, and a waist fitted most carefully inside out will be awry when tried on where it belongs. After the first trial fitting, the Parisian dressmaker asks her customer to sit down for a special process that is most useful. Except the ball dress and the promenade dress, the average dress is worn more in a sitting position than in a standing one. Ninety-nine women out of a hundred, sink into themselves more or less in sitting, and a bodice which looks pretty well while they are standing, will develop a wrinkle across the shoulders when they sit down.

Half a dozen times, perhaps, the Parisian dressmaker rips the shoulders apart and presses the material in the back, from the top of the side-back form to the neck, up, up, till every possibility of wrinkling there is dissipated.

A point in fitting the shoulders, upon which the French dressmaker lays great stress, is on no account to take more off the back than off the front, when the shoulder seams are taken in. Unless. There is the usual exception to any rule. If the woman who is being fitted, is hollow about the neck in front and the back of her neck between the shoulders is plump, then the bodice fits better and looks better, to have the shoulder seam moved back a little by taking off the back than off the front.

If the fronts are too wide and wrinkle, she cuts out the arm's eye gingerly but, if it is too tight, she runs her finger round and turns the raw edge out, knowing that it is going to stretch more or less, and that, if cut out in the beginning, it will very likely prove in the end, when it is too late, to be too narrow across the front. Many American dressmakers make the mistake of fitting a dress bodice as if the woman to wear it were a

slab of wood, and flat, the same distance from arm to arm, both back and front.

The Parisian dressmaker never gives her customers too little room across the bust, a very common fault of the native made dress. And she is equally careful not to give a vestige too much room across the back.

If there is a tendency to bag between the shoulders and the top of the bodice, rip go the shoulders again, and the fulness is pressed and smoothed and worked up. The waist line is the one point that is left undisturbed; to displace that would mean ruin.

After the waist has been fitted not only over, but actually *into* the figure by being worked into every curve and line of the upper half of the body, the seams are stitched just inside the bastings in all save shoulders and under-arm-seams. The bastings that hold inside and outside materials together are left in till the waist is done, but the bastings in the seams are ripped out, and the bones are put in before the last fitting is done, all the bones, that is, but those in the under-arm seams. The under-arm and shoulder seams are left subject to alteration, until after the waist has been boned and the fronts supplied with fastenings. When wrinkles there are none with the wearer sitting, then the shoulder and under-arm seams are stitched, and the latter receive their quota of bones.

The French dressmaker excels in her ability to make a dress fit without a wrinkle and not look tight. Many home dressmakers can turn out a wrinkleless bodice, but how very, very few do not make their wearers look like trussed fowls. A bandage of straight cloth can be put upon a body so that it will not wrinkle, (that is not at once) but it is done by pulling and hauling and crowding the flesh into it. To fit closely one or two layers of material so that one can turn her head, lift her arms, make a courtesy, or make any other reasonable movement, without having the appearance of dislocating some organ of the body, is quite another matter.

The dressmaker who has a reasonable amount of pride in her work, is not content to have a dress look pretty well, when it goes home in its pristine glory. She wishes it to fit just as well when she sees it weeks afterward. But, if it is to do this, it must not be too tight anywhere and it must be tight enough everywhere.

If the customer is habitually round shouldered, it is of no use to straighten her up while you are fitting the bodice. Make instead some sort of a variation upon the plain bodice that will conceal her bad posture.

If the material, like some of the rough finished serges, will stretch a great deal in wearing, have the dress sent back at the end of a dozen times wearing to have the fulness that has gathered pinched up and taken out from bodice and skirt. It costs you but a few minutes of your assistant's time, and secures you great credit from all who see your work.

The sleeve that has the curve for the elbow over the bend when the hand is brought to the breast, and the inside seam in a line with the thumb when the hand is dropped to the side and the back of the hand is toward the front, will sit well and not twist.

Padding is only allowable in habit bodices where plainness is *de riguer*, and even then Norfolk jackets are preferable, unless one knows the tailoring trade so accurately, that there is no chance of making a bodice all hills and hollows—so often done in padding. The woman who is so thin as to need padding to make a plain bodice presentable will look better in some other style that is less severe ; and it is your place to make her see the truth of this statement,

Wire bust forms are not inimicable to health and may be recommended with impunity when needed, but large ones upon a small figure are inartistic and objectionable. Do not allow the use of hair or wool bust forms. They are heating, injure the natural figure, and do not look natural. The slight hollow just in front and under the arms of many woman, is obviated by some

good dressmakers by making a small double crescent of the lining, filling it with a layer or two of sheet wadding (intersprinkled with orris and violet powder): this is tacked after the waist is finished where needed under the sleeve shields. If these crescents, which should in any event be small and graduated toward the edge, are to be worn, the fitting must be done over a trial pair. Other dressmakers get rid of the fullness caused by the hollow as described in the talk on Cutting, by taking up a triangle bias in the lining and stretching the outside material without bias over it, their claim being that false plumpness is very apt to show, however carefully applied. In general it is safer and more satisfactory in point of looks to hide too great slenderness by a different style of dress instead of padding up a shape for a a plain one.

Standing collars will fit closely if the lower edge (collars are cut on the bias) is stretched between the fingers two or three times.

Skirts cannot hang badly if they are fitted by shaping the front and side gores, either by goring or biases near the waist line so to make every seam hang in a vertical line from the waist to the foot. It is twisting the seams out of line in the fitting that causes most of the badly hung skirts. Each seam should represent a straight line from top to bottom, curved of course as it is carried in at the waist, but not stretched out of line by being carried too far back at the top when the belt is attached.

All this goes to prove that the French dressmaker knows just what she is talking about when she says that there is not much in cutting dresses, but that the test is in the fitting.

Cutting and Basting.

TO claim that there is but one right way of doing most things, dressmaking among others, is to make an egregious mistake. Every first class dressmaker has a way of her own, and, while there is often room for improvement upon it according to somebody's else way of thinking, it may be the way of all others for her.

But after making all due allowance for your way and mine, which, though differing a good deal, gives to each of us A-1 results, it may be we may both learn something from the experience of others who clear of our difficulties altogether, or get over them more easily than we do.

It pays to learn that there is a kind of economy that in the end is rank extravagance. It pays, for instance, to have the proper tools to work with. The table should be large enough to spread a skirt breadth on easily, and soft enough to trace upon, smooth enough to offer no obstacle to the roughest cloth, and heavy enough so that it cannot jolt or tip. There should be a chair comfortable enough to sit in before this table, and high enough to work from, and a footstool beside. It's a wonderful nerve saver, the footstool. Because a man tailor stands at his work is no reason at all why a woman should. Don't.

The shears should be sharp, and so should the scissors. A paper weight or two is a convenience and so is a supply of the thumb tacks such as artists use to tack their drawing paper upon boards. The pin cushion should be large and well filled; there should be some chalk, a tracing wheel, and needles and basting thread galore.

It pays to prove before wasting good linings whether the cutting guide is anywhere near the size required, as the inexperienced not infrequently, after the most pains-

taking attention to directions, find too late that they have slipped up somewhere and the lining is a world too big. or hopelessly wrong. The novice, with a new pattern or chart does bravely to cut a dummy waist, a lining of some cheap stuff, and an outside to go with it, though the latter is only unbleached muslin. The experimenting she can do freely with this dummy in the line of cutting and basting. It will be worth all the lessons given in a year in the so-called dressmaking schools.

Many clever dressmakers after fitttng the first lining cut from it another, make a memorandum of the peculiarities of the customer's figure and keep it on file. This makes fitting an easy matter, and her patrons are loud in their praises of the ease they have in getting a gown that is just right.

There cannot be a dressmaker anywhere nowadays who does not know that the wry forms in close fitting bodices are due to the fact that the line representing the waist line of each form was not laid parallel with a straight thread of the goods running from selvage to selvage; but, judging from the number of wry bodices one sees at every turn, someone surely forgets this rule.

If the material is intended to be on the bias when made up, it is not enough to twist it somewhat out of a straight line. Bias bodices, skirt breadths, or trimmings,—none of them will sit properly unless they are cut exactly on the bias; this means with all their straight edges at an angle of 45 degrees from the selvage, and an angle of 45 degrees is one that would run through both of the opposite corners of a square the sides of which were parallel to the selvages.

But even observing these points is not enough to save all waists from wrinkles. Bear in mind the axiom about stretching the outside cloth and letting the lining lie "easy" upon it; this is important in its way. Then it is necessary to the best results to know at the outset that basting is one of the 30 articles of the creed of the leading dressmakers. Most dressmakers think to econo-

mise time by basting as little as possible. The way to save time in the long run is to baste a great deal, and do it in the right way.

But horrid little wrinkles often put in an appearance about the waist or across the back forms after every one of the foregoing points has been carefully attended to and the bodice has been boned according to the best light obtained on that crucial point.

In your despair, have you ever turned to a first class woman's tailor and begged him to enlighten you on the subject of his paper fitting bodices that yet are never tight looking as so many dressmaker-made waists are? True, most tailors guard their secrets as a miser does his money, but now and then a friendly one may be found. He asks you if you have never heard of the woman who returned a gown ordered of a famous tailor "because the inside of the waist was a mass of wrinkles."

If you are not in the habit of wrinkling the lining in your bodices, have you never wondered why the gowns turned out by the leading tailors and dressmakers are as the woman in the true story said, "a mass of wrinkles," about the waistline on the wrong side?

The reason for the wrinkled lining in a nutshell is this: most dress fabrics stretch more or less. Linings are not supposed to stretch at all. The outside material is not only stretched somewhat when it is basted, but is kept upon the stretch in the seams afterward by the bones. Just where the greatest strain comes upon the outside material to keep it wrinkleless, a little additional room must be afforded it by the lining; hence the few tiny puckers in the lining. If these are omitted, it is possible for a very skilful fitter to make the bodice smooth upon the outside at the start, but shortly the outside will begin to stretch, and, unless there is a little leeway in the lining underneath to accomodate this lengthening out, the outside will have to collect its fulness in puckers where they will show.

One great curse of American dressmaking is the carelessness of the dressmakers about little things of

this sort which are really important. They make their standard, quantity of work, not quality. The leading dressmakers of Paris do not ask how many dresses they can turn out in a given time, but how recherche they can make each one within the limits of time and money afforded them by the customer.

The cleverest Parisian dressmakers do not pay much attention to cutting; they spend themselves on their fitting, but they are not fond of plain close fitting bodices and most of them make up their pretty, airy, fairy creations with an eye to their first effect, and with never a thought to their lasting qualities. The tailor builds his gowns for long continued and hard wear, and he takes oath that no amount of cleverness in fitting can make a plain close fitting bodice permanently *au fait*, unless it is correctly cut and basted. Bones are to *keep* seams in order, not to put them there by main strength, he says. And further the oracle deposes in this wise, "Every part of a bodice should be a law unto itself. It is not safe to cut any part double. First, because the under side is apt to be thrown out of line and so come out awry; but especially because each portion of the lining requires to be especially fitted to the outside material and basted there before the outside is cut. Wholesale blocking out may do for men's coats, and women's aprons, but not for bodices."

After the lining has been cut, stretch the cloth for the front, right side down upon the table, nap running toward the cutter, and fasten the cloth to the table by sticking in thumbtacks. Adjust the lining to bring the waist line on a straight cross thread, and then pin it in place, beginning at the top. Have the lining smooth to an inch below the top of the biases, then pucker it to tiny wrinkles from there to within one half inch of the waist line. Do not plait those puckers but hold them between the basting threads. Put the pins in slantwise to hold linings firmly and baste with fine stitches, putting the needle in each time at an angle. Do not turn down the front hems,

but leave them to pull the waist together with in fitting. Do not baste on the indicated tracing lines on the lining for the stitching but a trifle inside the tracing.

Wrinkle the lining on the under-arm form, a half inch both above and below the waist line on both sides of the form, and wrinkle the side-back form in the same way but only on the side that is to come next the back, Do not stretch the cloth for the side back form in pinning it to the table, this form being already on the bias, more or less.

For the back of the bodice, allow the lining to lie "easy" all over the stretched material beneath, and baste thus, but do not wrinkle the cloth anywhere.

Do not be afraid of basting too much, or of taking too much pains with the positions of the basting. This is half the battle for a perfect fitting waist. Baste through the centre of the biases lengthwise, and across the waist line of each form. In basting the forms together, begin with the waist line. Match this in each of the two portions that come together, then pin from this point up, and from the waist line down, and baste on the tracing line for the stitching.

Cut the biases open and join the indicated tracings for stitching, paying no further attention to the traced waist line. In joining the side-back form to the back, hold the side-back uppermost both in basting and in stitching. Do not stretch the curve in basting, but in stitching see that though not stretched, still, that the seam is not puckered at all. The proper shoulder seam is a straight slant with the front a little shorter than the back. Stretch the front to fit the back and baste thus. The stretching will curve the front a little, and make it fit the hollow in the shoulder underneath.

Where the outside is to show but four seams, one on each shoulder and one under each arm, the material should be cut on the bias, if it is designed to have it fit smoothly. If it is to be fulled or plaited a trifle at the waist line, back and front, it can be cut straight way of

the cloth. In any case the lining should be as carefully fitted as for the usual many seamed bodice.

The French bias is a stroke of genius for fitting the fronts of dress waists, and may be employed by those who cut by paper patterns as well as by those who can manipulate the most complicated charts. The French bias merely cuts the second bias at a different angle than that usually outlined in the ordinary paper patterns, thus bringing the cloth between the second bias and the under-arm seam on the bias, conducing to a better fit in that troublesome region. Many dressmakers always use the French bias even in the linings of bodices that are cut whole upon the outside. The accomplished cutters by chart understand about draughting the French bias. Those who cut direct from paper patterns that do not have this bias can make it for themselves. Cut through the second bias, (the farthest from the front) from top to bottom. About two inches from the line of perforations indicating the under arm seam measuring on the curve for the arm, make a mark, and draw a line from it to the top of the bias you have just cut through the middle. Now draw a second line from the same point (at the top of the bias) back to the arm curve to a point an inch farther along, that is to say three inches from the under arm seam perforations. The pencil marks now give a triangle resting on the arm curve, with the apex at the top of the second bias. Fold the sides or pencil lines together and pin or paste or baste; this swings the lower portion of the waist pattern between the under arm seam and the second bias, over to the left (or toward the right if it be the other front), so that the pattern lies upon the cloth on the bias instead of straightway. The little angle taken out of the arm curve rids the fitter of a troublesome fulness there, where most figures are hollow. Of course it is not desirable to take up anything on the arm curve from the outside material, and it is, therefore, stretched smooth to fit the lining. If the figure is full instead of hollow in front of the arm, simply cut the arm curve out a little to make up for the room

that is borrowed in the triangle bias.

The chief things to remember about cutting dress skirts are not to stretch gored edges, and to make allowance for the way in which the intended wearer habitually carries herself. She is likely to take what is for her an unnaturally upright pose in standing to be fitted, and, if she usually stands and walks with weight on heels, abdomen forward, and hips thrown to the front, letting the best made skirt down at the back and up in front, allowance must be made for this melancholy fact in cutting.

Very sleazily woven goods should be overcast as soon as cut to prevent fraying and stretching, both bodice and skirt forms. All thin goods should have a thread run about the arm's eyes to prevent their stretching out of shape.

It is of great importance to have the outside material and all the linings for every part of all dresses cut upon corresponding threads of the goods.

Unless this is done the strain of wearing falls in one way upon the outside fabric and in another way upon the inside lining, and in another upon the under lining, and the dress hangs badly, sits badly, and wears badly. Facings and linings for the skirts should be fitted exactly in cutting to the shape of the breadths and weaving of the outside, and linings should be just as precisely fitted to the outside of bodices.

In handling velvet and all exquisite fabrics use a piece of soft clean old cheese cloth as a foil. Basting threads and pin thrusts mar velvet, and should be used only where their trail will afterward be hidden. Velvet seams must be practically hand sewed. If machine stitching is used, every inch of the seams must be guarded to prevent the pile of one edge slipping past that of the opposite one, so that when finished the edges of the seam will look like a miniature field of wheat through which somebody has strolled, With a needle or some smooth instrument press the pile back from the edge in sewing, so that instead of flattening it down between

the edges of the seam, it shall be forced back and thus stand up partially hiding the seam when the dress is finished. It is in such points as that the dressmaker "must use her head."

No one's eyes should be so critical of her work as her own, and when anything goes astray or "a'gley," she should fathom the trouble and correct it.

Sleeves are now made "forty ways for Sunday," but it is rarely the exception that those do not sit best that are cut so as to bring a straight thread of the goods between the middle of the elbow and the middle of the top of the sleeve at the shoulder. This throws the part of the sleeve below the elbow upon the bias and produces the best fitting forearm sleeve.

Women whose figures are out of proportion must have special accommodations devised for them. A page of rules and suggestions might be laid down, and the next patron who happened along would very likely defy them all.

A dummy lining is the best aid to the dressmaker in experimenting in cutting for great perculiarity or deformity of figure. Do not be afraid of taking exceptions to rules, or of inventing new methods to suit the case in hand, whether it is to take a V out of the arm's eye at the back, to fit the very round-shouldered woman, or to insert one over the bust in front, to suit the very large woman.

Make the dummy lining fit though it has biases all over it, then cut the lining by it, and adjust the outside to make it as becoming as possible. Never allow a deformed woman to wear a severely plain bodice.

Economize cloth in cutting, but be a spendthrift with ideas and basting.

Making.

WHEN it comes to making, the actual sewing and finishing, the American dressmaker has nothing to learn from any one. First class American dressmakers turn out the best work, so far as the mechanics of dressmaking go, of any dressmakers in the world. In point of fact, they make dresses too well. They might with advantage to themselves, and with no disadvantage to their patrons, unlearn something about sewing, and let some of the fussy details, over which they now bother their heads to very little purpose, go by default.

Doubtless, a riding habit cannot be too well made. There is not a superfluous inch of material about it and, probably, it cannot be too well sewed, or too carefully finished. But the A-1 American dressmaker puts too much fine sewing into her dresses. They look well; they look about as well on the wrong side as upon the right side; perhaps if they were not such marvels of patience in the inside finishing, they might be more artistic to look at on the outside. Look at even the highest priced foreign made dresses; by comparison, they seem almost slovenly in workmanship, compared with American dresses, but after all to what end put such an infinite amount of pains into the finishing off of a dress that, nowadays, is worn but a few times. The riding habit that lasts its last thread out, may be made as well as possible, and even the heavy cloth street dress demands considerable detail of finishing to make it pass muster and stand its hard usage, but house dresses and evening dresses might be slighted in finishing just as the Parisian dressmakers slight them without suffering an iota in looks or wearing possibilities, and with a notable saving in time and trouble.

A good many American dressmakers are martyrs

to fine stitches out of a mistaken regard for the unimportant part of their work. Nobody desires to return to the pretty ugly sewing of our great grandmothers' days, when their hand-made gorgeous brocades were not only not very carefully finished on the inside, but were not particularly well sewed on the outside. Oh, I know their sewing was held up as a fetish to our childish understandings, but look over a collection of their most splendid clothes preserved in any museum, and take courage.

The Parisian dressmaker is clever. She knows every trick in putting her work where it will make the most show. So long as she gets the effect she wants, and it stays as long as long as it is required, which is not long, for instance, in a tulle party frock, she doesn't try to make the sewing in every part of the sort that would win a prize at a school exhibition. The Parisian Milliner long, long ago found that she could get effects by pinning on her hat and bonnet trimmings that absolutely defied sewing, and the Parisian dressmaker will catch a flounce of lace here and a ribbon there with fascinating grace, and never bother her head about how it looks on the wrong side. Why should she?

There is a chance for American dressmakers who have spoiled American customers by over precision of finish upon the wrong side of dresses, to introduce a change by quoting the example of the most influential of the Paris modistes; they might offer to make a dress, for a given sum, that shall be neat on the under side, but not sewn with a microscope; or one finished microscopically as to sewing for a certain additional sum. This would win the day and offend nobody. It is high time that American dressmakers learned some of the Parisian tricks.

For the necessary multiplicity of detail in making the simplest dress after it is cut and basted and fitted, the following suggestions are based upon the points that many dressmakers have not yet learned to follow

or avoid, as the case may be.

In the matter of seam stitching, it pays to use the best quality of silk for everything but wash goods. The waist seams should he sewed with fine stitches that lock in the middle. For stitching skirts, the stitch should be lengthened to double the length. Skirt seams do not have the strain of bodice seams, and sit better if the long stitch is employed. All seams should be stretched to the full extent of their *straight edge* in stitching, as the seam passes under the machine presser foot.

Large dressmaking establishments employ specialists, one who does nothing but cut and fit, or several who cut and fit exclusively; sometimes even the cutters and fitters are different individuals; then there are workwomen who make waists exclusive of sleeves; others who do nothing but make and trim sleeves; others are skirt makers. The buttonholes are made by someone else, and so on and so on. The average dressmaker must combine all these specialities in her single grasp, and her task at best is not an easy one; however she can do it, and must.

The dressmaking establishment with which she must compete, has a man tailor to make all the jackets and waistcoats for its outing suits, and its dressmakers coolly if wittily say that a dressmaker who attempts to make coats and vests should be arrested for malpractice.

Perhaps the dressmaker who doesn't know how to make a coat or a vest should be, but it often happens that the dressmaker is an all round able woman who can do everything in her line and do it pretty well.

If she aspires to be something of a tailor as well as a dressmaker, or even to be a very good dressmaker, she must learn that tailors call their pressing irons their best friends.

It isn't enough to iron; dresses must be ***pressed***, by main strength. Many goods ought not to be ***ironed***, that is to say, they cannot with impunity stand having irons pushed into their texture enough to stretch it out.

Pressing from above downward, not along in a line, is the sort of pressing seams and binding, etc. require. Do not iron seams flat along upon the surface. The edges of the open seams will show on the right side ten times out of ten. A common place but efficacious way of pressing seams to look well, is to open them over the rounding edge of an ironing board, and allow the iron to touch only the centre of the seam. The edges of the seam will then not be outlined upon the goods. Velvet requires to be pressed with infinite painstaking. An iron covered with a damp cloth and set upon end, over the point of which the velvet seam is carried is one method. Another is to open the velvet over the rounding edge above referred to, which is to be covered with coarse and very soft flannel into which the pile can sink without being flattened out.

The custom of binding seams with lute string instead of overcasting them gives an adorably neat finish, and many good dressmakers, by cutting the edges of the seams into scollops before they are bound, succeed in producing a waist that fits very well. But the best Paris dressmakers do not bind their seams. They overcast them. Their claim is that no matter how many scollops are made in the seams, or how loosely the lute string ribbon is folded over the edge, still the ribbon binds more or less. The overcast edge gives in wearing to fit the strain on the bodice, and readily adjusts itself to the figure. Open every seam, even to the curved sideback seams, and bone every one, except the shoulder seam, and if the bodice is a close fitting bodice as in a habit bodice and some others, put an extra bone between the second bias and the first underarm seam.

Bones are not intended to fit the seams to the wearer, but merely to keep fitted seams on the stretch, therefore the careful, wise dressmaker fits every bone to the seam it is to occupy, curving some merely at the waist and over the hips, if they go over the hips; and others, as in the side-back seams, to follow the side curve of the seam. It is a very easy process,

requiring only that the bones shall lie in warm water for some time, and be shaped over a warm flat iron. While damp a hole should be bored through each end and twice between, one point being at the waist line to facilitate keeping the bone in place in the casing.

Because of the care with which first-class dressmakers and tailors bone bodices, it is easy to see why none of the patent steels and other contrivances ready to be applied by paste or a few stitches caty cornered are used in well made gowns. The very best quality of whale bone is only just good enough.

Bone castings should be puckered decidedly full about the waist line, and full but less so all the way.

The fullness makes of each casing a pocket, into which the bone sinks, putting the seam above it upon the stretch, while the bone drops away from it into the easier bed, and thus prevents the "rubbing" of the seams upon the right side of a bodice, always in evidence sooner or later where the bones are pressed into the seam by a tight plain casing.

The bones should reach from the bottom of the bodice, or so far as it is designed to fit closely, (the full skirts of a blouse being of course a possible exception) to within an inch of the top of the corset at the back and side-back. Under the arms the bones must stop short at least a trifle below the corset, and, while in front they may reach nearly but not quite to the top of the biases, they should not be attached to any seam within an inch and a half of the top of the bone. The best casing is a narrow galoon with selvage edges. The upper end should be loose from the seams for a half inch at least, and folded and sewed double, to make a sort of hood in which the bone can play. If sewed to the seam to the very end, they soon wear the dress into holes and show at all times. Two or three strong stitches should be taken through the holes previously bored, from each side of the seam, to prevent the bone twisting on its side as it will otherwise do, and also to keep the seam well distributed over it, instead of allowing it to crawl along

to rid itself of the strain upon it.

If an extra bone is put in between the second bias and the under arm seam, it is covered, and set diagonally between the two, ending on the seams, and is catstitched to the lining only. It should be cut a half inch longer than the space it fills, so that it bows out slightly when fastened at each end. When the bodice is in position, the bow sinks toward the figure, straightens itself somewhat, and puts the outer material on the stretch as desired to keep it from wrinkling, as it is apt to do over full figures.

A heavy dress or one that is to be worn a good deal, and all dresses with close fitting bodices for large women, in addition to the whalebones down the front, should be provided with one of the flap, kid covered corset side steels which can be bought by the pair for a few cents. The best way of adjusting this steel is to slip it into a pocket made in a double flap of silk, or any lining material in accord with the dress. Attach the flap at one side, so as to bring the bone just in the centre when the dress is fastened; it takes the strain off the slighter whalebones, helps to keep a too prominent abdomen from ruining a bodice and the flap answers as a fly under the opening. The steel reaches from the bottom of the bodice as high as it will go, which is just below the bust.

A belt of non-elastic webbing fastened at the waist on the three back seams is a necessity in a bodice. The Parisian dressmaker makes this belt noticeably tighter than the outside of the waist in order to keep the bodice from "riding up" in the back. American dressmakers to prevent skirts sagging have latterly attached these belts pretty generally to skirts by means of hooks and eyes at the back.

The Paris dressmaker refuses to use them, saying that in every case they give to the waist a strained look up and down the back. and pull the skirts up in the middle of the back. She prevents the skirt's sagging by making the waist band tighter than we do, and directly under

the back breadth attached to the lower edge of the waist band, she puts a little cushion of curled hair to fill in the too pronounced hollow that nearly every back has at that point.

Facings for the inner side of the bottom of bodices and sleeves should be of silk always, and on the bias. The facings sit better if the edges are turned in and they are hemmed down in long hemming stitched instead of being run on and turned up and felled down.

The neck should be faced and felled down neatly, and the collar should be finished separately then blind stitched in place. Where hooks and eyes are used to fasten the fronts, use the common small hooks and eyes, and sew them on alternately, first a hook and then an eye down each side. This insures their staying fastened which they will not do if all the hooks are on one side and the eyes on the other. To prevent hooked fronts yawning set all the eyes even with the edge and all the hooks in a quarter of an inch, so that a line drawn from top to bottom touching each hook and eye would be slightly zig-zag. Hem facings down over them after the hooks and eyes are sewed strongly to the finished edge made by turning the edges of the outside and lining in toward each other, the front whalebones being pocketed between.

It is a good idea to strengthen the arm's eyes in delicate fabrics in which the linings are also delicate in texture by stitching a narrow bias strip of lining about the seam. Overcast sleeve seams separately, and overcast arm's eye seams with edges together and as narrow as compatible with strength.

Braided gowns, those that have applied trimmings such as galoons, passementeries, etc., should have a lining of crinoline or canvas under the portion of the cloth bearing the trimming.

Facings of canvas or crinoline in skirts that are not lined throughout should be seamed separately, have the seams pressed open, and turned toward the dress when applied. A dress that is to be worn on the

street will outwear more than one binding; therefore it makes it easier for the repairer if the skirt is finished completely before the binding of braid or velveteen is applied. It is only necessary to turn raw edges in toward each other and fell the lining upon the outside just above the edge of the latter as it folds onto the under side of the skirt. Bindings put on as a piping look and wear better than when applied as a binding.

Hemming especially upon Henrietta, Lansdown—any of the fine wools, should be done with short needlefuls of split silk. It makes a much better looking hem to use a medium sized silk split, than the finest silk whole, the latter being twisted and more or less hard. It takes but a few minutes to split the silk for all the hemming on any dress and well repays the slight extra bother. Never hem selvages; snip them at intervals and turn them under or cut them off. No amount of pressing will prevent a hemmed selvage puckering. The skirt opening in the middle of the back should be on the under edge of plaits or gathers, and should have a safety hook and eye for fastening half way down.

Small wire rings through which to run puckering strings are better than tapes. Where lace or tulle is to be gathered run on one or more rows of the narrow lace "taste" sold for the purpose which is merely a succession of eyelets with a thread or two on each side for the stitching to hold it in place.

Skirt bands are wrinkled strings before they are worn thrice. In place of them "pipe" the the tops of skirts with a small cord. the cover of the same being felled down upon the under side. Silk looks well but cotton surah or something of that nature lies almost as flat and wears longer. However, this cannot be done if the skirt is to be worn with a round waist; in that case, use a real belt tape—it is flat and stiff enough not to wrinkle.

The leading dressmakers not only send dresses home complete to the ribbons in the sleeves, shields under the arms, tiny sachets of powder under them (if

the crescent be not used for fitting purposes,) in packing boxes long enough to take the skirt without folding, and with the shoulders of the bodice plumped out with tissue paper to prevent wrinkles in transit; but every dress sent home is supplied with a wooden "shoulder" to hang it upon and a skilful needlewoman is sent up to see that the customer upon trying her gown on finds it just right.

After the most careful last fitting, sometimes, a simple error or oversight will leave something quite wrong, and to discover this, just when one has barely time to dress, is an aggravation that makes the most patient patron "damn" her dressmaker with anything but "faint praise."

The delicate little attention of these final touches helps to make a dressmaker lauded to the skies, and costs but a trifle which she receives back forty fold.

Dress Goods.

EVERY season for the past half dozen years the general verdict has been that, at last, manufacturers must have reached the limit of possibility in beautiful weaving, charming combinations, and lovely coloring as regards dress goods. But each succeeding season every body—including the manufacturers themselves—has been astonished and pleased by still other and more fascinating novelties.

Silk, wool, and cotton—these three divisions still include all the wealth of dress fabrics known, and there are no new colors in the world. But the variety of shading possible in the seven primary colors, plus the limitless possibilities in combining them is infinite, apparently. And out of cotton, wool, and silk, ingenuity manages to devise without end novelties that have all the practical virtues of being new under the sun although when reduced to their lowest terms they prove to be related to very old fashioned fabrics.

There really appears to be a different texture and a special shade of color for every woman in the world, and yet three quarters of all women seem bent upon having just what the other quarter selects. The woman who knows of her own free will what she wants is not common, and the woman who knows what she ought to have is positively rare.

The dressmaker is appealed to over and over again for advice. If she aspires to satisfy all the demands made upon her she must not only be an artist in making clothes, but she must be a bureau of information about the dry goods trade. In addition she is supposed to have a brain large enough to remember all the foibles and fads of all her customers, and a heart sensitive and loving enough to bathe each one in sympathy for all the troubles and trials to the unbosoming of which the

fitting of a dress somehow leads.

It certainly does "take it out of a body" to endeavor to live up to these requirements, but, if one means to hit only the weather vane, she is more likely to do so by aiming at the stars than if she fires at the barn door. It pays to be all that is asked of one. The dressmaker who succeeds in knowing everything from the dry goods market a season ahead, to how to dress a scarecrow so that she will look equally well in a bathing suit and a skating dress, has her hands full, but so has anybody who means to compass all there is of success to be had. It pays. It pays in money, and more than that it pays in fame.

It pays for the dressmaker to respect herself and her profession. If she does both, and if her knowledge of the art of dressmaking is in proportion, she can present her bills for work done with as much dignity and sense of their justice as can the lawyer, the artist, or the architect.

The custom is increasing among city dressmakers of making one or more trips abroad each year, and importing goods and models to fill individual orders; also that of importing from choice lines of fabrics (and keeping on hand) for which customers can select exclusive novelties, There is considerable profit accruing to the dressmaker from these purchases *if* she be a skilful buyer. There are forty out-of-town dressmakers who make periodical trips to shopping centres now where there was one a few years ago, and the number of dressmakers who buy all linings and furnishings for the dress, if not the material also for each of the gowns they make, increases rapidly. There are compensations for taking this trouble. By buying a quantity of linings at once, the dressmaker can earn a commission for herself, can get better materials to work with, and can give better satisfaction to her patrons, than if each one of them bought a small amount of the things in question for herself. Another reason why it is a good thing for the dressmaker to become a purchasing agent, if not an importer for her

customers, lies in the fact that it takes the dressmaker out of her sewing room where she is in danger of becoming a slave to her shears and tape measure, carries her to the fashion centres, keeps her in touch with the world, and really rests her by a change of occupation. If one cannot go to Paris and London it is possible to identify one's self with the customers of a leading Metropolitan house or houses, to become acquainted with the buyers, and thus to see the sample books of new things each season weeks before they are placed upon the counters. This gives one a chance to be the oracle of her neighborhood.

But an oracle has to be very wise in this day and generation. There is next to nothing that it will not be for her direct or indirect advantage to know.

Chief among the knowledge of materials that the dressmaker should have at her finger ends, is the possibilities and limitations in the manner of treating different textures. This is the foundation of a great part of the success of French gowns. The utter lack of careless disregard of this knowledge is at the base of the failure of the majority of native-made dresses in this country.

The Parisian dressmaker *reserves* one style of handsome design exclusively for magnificent brocades that are so they require no trimming and are so beautiful in their own pattern that they must be made up with long flowing lines to display the material itself. An American dressmaker is painfully apt to see and admire the design of such a dress, and make one like it for some one of her patrons substituting for the heavy rich fabric that would almost stand alone, some fluffly, flimsy stuff that in justice to itself should be draped.

Parisians introduced stiffened skirt linings to extend their cloth skirts, and for a season now they have been holding up their hands in horror over the spectacle of American-made gowns of pretty soft, dainty fluttering silks stretched into board-like sweeps by horse hair such as they had found desirable for heavy cloths.

The American dressmaker is too meek. She will take any kind of an order fearing to offend a customer by refusing. It would be a feather in her cap in the end, if she refused to throw away her work upon unworthy models.

To compete with La Parisenne the American dressmaker must learn to perfection the handling required to show various dress goods at their best. The best handling for India silk is not the best for ladies' cloth, nor is the treatment proper for foule at all the thing for cloth of silver, or rich *moire antique.*

It is not enough either to know that superb brocade trims itself, and that applied ornament, save as a jeweled border or lace for the neck aud arms, is an impertinence. The dressmaker who understands the art of dressmaking will not make up a material suitable only for a dowager for a girl of eighteen, or vice versa.

The American dressmaker is fertile in resources and has a wonderful fund of tact. Let her but exercise these, and the most captious patron will melt at once under the illuminating advice of the dressmaker as to what to buy and how to make it.

The dressmaker who knows her business thoroughly keeps herself posted in dry goods trade matters as well as in designs for dresses. The big shops have one buyer for laces and another for trimmings; one for wools and another for silks; in short, a specialist for each department. It need not be set down that the dressmaker who must know something of everything from button hole twist to wedding veils, cannot be expected to know all there is to know of all the details of the business from which she draws her supplies. But, if she subscribes to fashion journals that keep her posted in advance upon all matters connected with dress, she will know a great deal before a good many people find it out.

For example the retail shops are flooded with Vandyke laces. But the dressmaker who is up in the trend of the dry goods trade does not advise her patrons

to buy Vandyke points. She has learned that they are "popular," yes; but they are no longer worn by the most fashionably dressed woman abroad. New designs are forthcoming from the lace manufacturer, and dealers who have a lot of Vandyke points on hand are endeavoring naturally to make you and me think they are all the rage in order to work off their superfluous stock. If one finds a really beautiful piece at a real "bargain" in price there is every reason for picking it up to use where it will not be over conspicuous, as upon a house gown; but nobody wishes to buy for a street dress or one that is to be worn in public anything that is bound to become very common because the bottom is falling out of the price, owing to the lapse from style of the article in question.

The American dressmaker must study more.

The nomenclature of dry goods changes from season to season, but no one needs to pay much attention to names except the merchant who uses them for facility in filling orders. The dressmaker cares little whether the wool is woven slanting and is called diagonal, or in waving lines and is named corkscrew. The thing that she is concerned with is whether it has a hard twist and is going to wear shiny quickly; whether it is really all wool; or whether there is cotton in it to turn it shabby in a short time. Dressmakers have gone on recommending dark serge for summer traveling dresses till the ghosts of there victims who have worn their fingers out brushing it will surely rise and haunt them some day. For winter wear serge is admirable. For summer it is too hot, and catches dust, especially the prettier English rough finished serge, in a manner quite awful to behold. The dressmaker who first had the courage to say the truth about serge received the blessings of every woman who heard of her.

It doesn't matter whether I have an all-over crinkled crêpe wool or not, if it is to be interlined, and the interlining is to be seamed up with it, but the wise dressmaker will warn me against having an "all-over," if

there is to be but one lining and that seamed separately, because, after I have worn the dress a few times, it will have sagged below the lining, and will look weary and sad, and so shall I. She, being wise, will save me and herself annoyance by advising me to take the crinkles with plain supporting threads between.

She will advise me that there are English dyes and German dyes and French dyes, and that, if I am picking out an all black toilet, I ought to select all blacks of the same dye, for one wears green, and one gray, and one yellow, and my gown and hat and coat will look passè long before they should, and long before they would, if the blacks were alike and wore to the same tone.

I may not know, but my dressmaker should, that English crape for mourning is better in quality when sold in the roll than when folded, and that the rough side ought to be put next the dress to give it something to cling to, and that the smooth side ought to be turned out so that it will not catch dust and threads; and that if the crape is applied to silk or some smooth surface it should be lined before being put on with a thin rough black cloth that it may have the support it requires in wide folds to keep it in place.

If I do not know any better than to buy cheap and poor silk just because it is "warranted every thread silk," it would be a beneficent action on the part of my dressmaker to tell me, that "all silk" silk very low in price is made up of either very poor silk or very short ends and that either one is not worth making up. The wise dressmaker knows that most of the high priced novelties at the beginning of the season are no better, so far as the grade of the silk or cotton or wool goes, than many that are much cheaper, the advanced price being to cover the oddity in weaving, or unusualness in some other particular. If she wishes to deserve my gratitude, she will advise me against buying these, unless I can have endless changes of toilet, because they are not enough better in grade to make it worth my while to afford them,—I who can have but few dresses,—when

they are new; and, when at the end of the season they are cheap, they are pronounced enough to look bizzarre, and so much more out of style than something less noticeable.

It is an excellent idea to find out the differences between leading foreign and American productions. It assists greatly in buying to know that in fancy silks France leads; that American black silks are so good France imports some of them; that plain, colored American silks are admirable; that staple, plain wools are good here at home, but that for novelties the foreign manufacturers whose designers and colorers have been in the business from generation to generation, excel us. The Paisley coloring in some of the Scotch mixtures, for example, is something that we here cannot duplicate; at least we have not done so yet.

It pays to know that the prettiest brocaded fancy linings are a delusion and a snare for anything but capes. They are not firm enough for bodices or skirts.

The very best possible lining for any dress is one of silk. It adds something to the cost of the dress, but it adds a great deal more to the style of the dress. It has with all its thinness, a firmness and a body that nothing else has. A silk bodice lining does not wear as long as a fine silesia lining, and, in some of the dresses that cost even two or three hundred dollars and have an all silk skirt lining, the bodice is lined with silesia where the dress, as in the case of a cloth street dress, is to be subjected to hard wear.

Taffeta is the best silk for lining, and when it cuts out about the foot, a facing of cotton surah and a silk balayeuse will make it strong and presentable again.

Percaline is totally unfit for the very wide skirts, well as it answered the purpose in cheap dress when sheath skirts were in vogue, as it collapses in yards of additional weight about the feet. Lawn or paper cambric is the only suitable lining for summer silk dresses, where silk cannot be afforded. Stiff interlinings are already passè in Paris in all gowns save as facings about

the foot. These facings should range from ten to fourteen inches according to the height of the wearer. The break in so many skirts when the wearer steps is due to the carelessness or ignorance of the dressmaker who put in a facing as deep for the short woman as the tall woman.

A dressmaker may make a good gown and not know *gros de Londres* from *ombre mousseline paise* by name. But the gown will not amount to much, unless she recognizes the essential difference in the materials and designs the dress accordingly. She can be a pretty good dressmaker and not leave town once in a year, nor know whether batiste or *peau de soie* is the correct thing for a golfing costume, till she reads a description of one.

But, the dressmaker who keeps herself posted on the dry goods market and new styles, and knows them from A to Z when they are new and fresh, is the dressmaker who is not going to miss getting anything that is worth having.

Trimmings, Laces, Furs, Etc.

ONE of the differences between good dressmaking and poor dressmaking is the tendency on the part of the latter to over-elaboration, and meaningless design. The home-made hat and bonnet are nearly always over-trimmed. The home-made dress and the gown made by the professional dressmaker who is a novice incline the same way.

Half the dresses that are meant to be attractive combination gowns look like nothing so much as patchwork, and two thirds of all dresses, instead of having a governing motive enhanced by the decoration, are but collections of more or less handsome materials put together without ryme, reason, or art.

Of course, there is nobody left who does not know that the province of trimming is to ornament, but nobody will deny that the greater part of all the trimming to be seen looks as if it had been cut off the material for the sake of sewing it on again, and rarely as if it had been applied by the hand of an intelligent directing being carrying out a definite idea of her own or of somebody's else.

One of the commonest designs in dresses were first made is that giving the effect of one dress opening over another. Where there are not actually two robes the idea is furthered by having a separate petticoat, or skirt panels; a waistcoat, or perhaps there are but a chemisette and cuffs to carry out the idea of an underdress.

The idea is a pleasant one to the eye, but half the time the design is spoiled by the silly way in which it is put into effect. Suppose for example that the inner robe is white and the outer one black; it would be quite the proper thing to have black revers turning away from the white chemisette faced with white, or to have cuffs

of the black turned back faced with white; or to have puffings of the white show through slashes in the black sleeve; but to set a puff of white on the outside that has no connection with the supposed inner robe, at once gives a mixed up look to the dress that is fatal. Have some plan, some motion in combining goods.

An unobtrusive fabric, however simple, so that it be good of the kind, will, if made up aristically, pass muster among much handsomer materials; but once add to it some cheap trimming and its poorness, in contrast to the other fine gowns about it, is thrown into positive poverty. The simple dress of itself, so long as it does not transgress any law of beauty, might have been chosen by a simple taste out of sheer preference for its simplicity; but attempt to trim it up with poor trimming, and it is stamped at once as poverty stricken from necessity, not plain from preference.

On the other hand, trimmings should not be too splendid for the materials they are to adorn, nor incongruous. Fashion's leading tailor can put a mohair braid on a cloth street dress and ask two hundred dollars for it with impunity; but he could get fifty more as well as not; why doesn't he put pendant jets on the dress? because he knows better; the jets do not belong on a street dress, but on carriage and drawing room toilets.

Study more. Study cause and effect, and the relations of things.

A white piqué waistcoat for the street dress is quite correct in taste as it can be laundered daily, if need be, and may always be fresh and dainty. But a white yoke or white trimming of any kind of material that cannot be laundered, on a dress that must see hard or constant service, where it is certain after a few times wearing to look dingy and inelegant, is an error in taste that is inexcusable.

The rich silk passementeries in even the most expensive varieties are made of silk wound over cotton cords Upon elegant dresses these outwear the dresses,

but upon dresses that are to be knocked about from Dan to Beersheba they are a poor choice. They do not look appropriate when new and they soon become shabby.

All silk fringes are worth buying. No silk braids are, save for use upon garments that are to be seldom subjected to hard wear.

Trimming is not designed to cover up, but to enhance. When for economy's sake it is used to cover up, it must be selected and applied with redoubled skill to prevent it "giving away" its mission.

Trimming should mean something. Bands that border nothing, straps that confine nothing, bows that tie nothing, offend the taste.

A girdle on a close-fitting plain waist is an anomaly. It should seem, if it does not, to belt in fulness.

Draperies invisibly held are always annoying to the sensitive vision. It adds greatly to the influence they have upon the eye, to supply a strap or some apparent means of holding the gathers.

A full gathered skirt below a tight-fitting plain waist is comical. Where does the fulness come from ? The waist should have some fulness, else the body has the appearance of having been made and dressed in two portions. The body is whole from head to foot, and this must be born in mind in order not to spoil the lines of the figure and the effect of the dress as a whole.

The most beautiful trimmings are those worked upon the material; they represent the utmost refinement and elegance. Embroideries and those done in connection with fine appliqué are usually beyond the province of the dressmaker, being wrought either on or off her premises by specialists. But a gown to be thus ornamented should be designed with especial reference to the trimming, and the dressmaker is therefore by no means unconcerned in the decoration.

Laces like dress-stuffs have well defined limits within which alone they should be employed. Delicate, fine, fairy like laces only are suitable for the very young, and

the superb heavy rich laces are appropriate only for magnificent gowns for stately matrons. There are laces *and* laces, but most people are in a curious state of ignorance about them all.

One need not be a connoisseur in lace to know enough about it to be able to tell good from bad, nor need she devote much time to the study in order to get a passing knowledge that will be of genuine value. For ordinary uses it is desirable to know that laces may all be roughly divided into hand-made and machine made examples. The hand-made laces are either "point" laces, that is made stitch by stitch with a needle; or "pillow" laces made upon a pillow by weaving with a number of little bobbins around pins stuck in the pattern; or a combination of pillow and point lace.

Machine laces do their best and often a wonderfully good best it is too, to imitate all hand-made laces. Latterly, the especial fashion in laces has been the revival of heavy points or their imitation, those reproducing the raised points of the Spanish and Venetian schools having a particular vogue. This is a far throw from the reign of the so-called oriental laces that overswept the country a few years ago, but not so erratic a one as it seems, for the absence of draperies in the present fashions precludes the wholesale use of deep flouncings, and the more compact laces that do not lend themselves to fulness, and are carefully enough made in the machine laces to bear more or less scrutiny, are the only ones thats in reason, could be used for the flaring collars and revers and similar styles of the present day.

Handsome lace should not be gathered to disturb the pattern, and beautiful fine laces are out of harmony with coarse materials; two points that many dressmakers quite overlook in embellishing gowns with lace, or endeavoring to do so. The so-called guipures, a name that has been appropriated by some of the machine laces imitating the ancient guipure which included all raised point lace, in good quality are

suitable for dresses of heavy material as velvets, satins handsome wools in combination with these, etc., but on the delicate soft stuffs they are wholly out of place, and should not be permitted to mar an otherwise fair creation.

"Thread lace" does not mean anything, for all lace is thread lace, whether machine or hand made, being either of silk thread, linen thread or cotton thread; but real hand made lace is always valuable and in good style if used in conjunction with proper materials.

Furs are perhaps the biggest lottery in the shopping trade outside of boots and shoes, and the latter is one of the few things with which the dressmaker need not bother her head on anybody's account but her own. It pays to buy furs of a reputable dealer and depend upon his advice. All black furs are dyed, and upon the dye depends much of their subsequent value. Even the so-called natural black furs are of a brownish tinge and are dyed for the market. The Germans dye Persian lamb and Astrachan skins better than anybody else in the world, and the English beat the world with seal skins.

Persiana that looks to the inexperienced eye every whit as good as the German cured and dyed article, undersells it two to one, but the German article will outwear it six to one.

A little information of this kind is extremely useful to go shopping with.

Suppose that furs which are warranted dyed by the best dyers in that special line, are offered half lower than what seems to be the same article a few doors away. It may be that the difference is because of the greater prestige of the higher priced store, and that part of the difference in price is to pay the fashionable dealer's high rent, and not for a superior article in fur. But the chances are that the cheap fur, while made up of well cured and dyed skins, contain only odds and ends of them, put together in such a way that thick and thin skin comes together, insuring little wearing quality for

the fur.

Prices whiffle up and down to accord with fashionable favor, but all skins, as of the chinchilla, that come from a little animal are one not plenty, are always high priced when finely matched. The so-called electric seals are high priced at any price, as they wear very ill indeed. If it is selected, it should always be for a cape, and should be bordered with some strong fur, as Martin. The cheap "seal" furs are so soft they wear bare on edges very soon, and are not to be thought of for jackets or anything that is to be subjected to rubbing. In buying in the spring at "bargain sales," it is well to remember that Martin is beloved of moths because of its natural odor, while the pests rarely attack seal and Persiana and other dyed furs.

There are furs *and* furs, and only an expert's opinion is worth anything about them, so many are the pranks played in curing, dyeing, and sewing the skins. Therefore learn all you can about them, so as to know what to avoid, and then deal with a A-1 house.

The making of bows is a Parisian knack that deserves to be caught over here. It is'nt difficult to make a fetching bow, and yet most women dread to undertake it, and fail when they do. "What advice would you give to a would-be bow maker?" I asked a Parisian adept. "Don't fuss," was her reply. "People take too much pains with bows and they look set and homely."

Her way was to make each bow of one piece of ribbon, unless she had a lot of short ends to make up for economy's sake. She folded a lot of loops together and took a bit of fine thread wire, black or white, whichever accorded best with the color of the ribbon, and twisted it tightly a few times round the loops; then she gave each one a pert little touch, snapped a strap of ribbon over the wire, and there was the bow. If she wished the loops to set out very bouffantly, she put a flat ribbon wire under the ribbon as she bowed it up, but she used

little wire, saying that first qualities of ribbon and the tight strapping through the middle kept the loops fluffy enough.

If anybody with a scrap of taste will sit down with ten cents worth of crêpe tissue paper, and experiment for a few minutes, she can learn to make bows as well as a French Milliner.

It puzzles many women to guage the amount of material they will need for a dress, if they have no pattern at hand that gives the precise figures. But it is easy to reckon the quantity. How wide is the material? How many widths of it will be required to cut the number of breadths going into the skirt? How long are these breadths to be?

If the cloth is a yard wide and there are to be six yards in the width of the skirt, and the wearer needs a skirt 42 inches long when finished; then, roughly speaking, allowance must be made for six breadths, 45 inches, or a yard and a quarter long, each, to allow for turning in, or seven and a half yards of cloth for the skirt.

Of material half as wide, as much again would be needed. If the material were half as wide again, that is 54 inches, or three halves of a yard, one third less material would be needed than for cloth a yard wide. For the bodice allow the length from shoulder to bottom of bodice back and front, and twice the width from shoulder to shoulder including any fulness there is to be. The length of each sleeve must be allowed and the quantity doubled, if the sleeve is to be large, made in one piece and of narrow width goods. Facings and small side forms will be provided in the goring.

It doesn't pay a dressmaker to make buttonholes, for there is always a specialist in buttonhole making glad to get the work, but now that buttonholes are "coming in" again it pays to remember that most materials require an interfacing under the buttonhole hem of stiffened muslin or canvass.

The buttonhole side proper? Recall the story of the

minister who prayed that none of his hearers (on judgment day) should be found on the buttonhole side.

Color.

MUCH of the effect of dress depends upon its color. Gowns of handsome fabrics made upon becoming lines, may be very ugly in effect because of their unbecoming colors, or because these are ill combined, or are out of harmony with their surroundings.

Nature patiently teaches us impersonal lessons in color that we are slow to learn, and, of the habit of close observation that unfolds the truth with regard to what is becoming to us as individuals, we have precious little. It is not that we cannot learn, but that we will not. "What a pretty bonnet," I say to a friend, and add with brutal frankness, "but you ought not to wear yellow."

"Pshaw," says she, "what odds? I like yellow," And off she goes looking sallow and dull, and every body who sees her and chances to have an "eye for color," shudders at her bad judgment.

"What odds?" That is what we think, if we do not say it. And yet we like to think of ourselves as artists in dress. The truth isn't always pleasant, but it is good for us. We shall never be a really well dressed people, till we take the trouble to know beauty when we see it, and, how to outwit ugliness, and until we are really honest with ourselves.

An entire red gown is a fascinating bit of color in the dim religious light of a studio corner, but red is a trying color to go abroad in by daylight on the city streets in July. It's worth nothing that the gorgeous, crimson, sunset, glow comes when the shadows are deepening. A red gown on a sandy beach with an expanse of sea for a background, or a scarlet parasol in the fastnessness of the mountain, is delightful, but either in juxtaposition with crude red bricks in town

under a fiery sky is an atrocity.

Nature! Fudge, say you? And you point out that a green lawn, with gay flower beds may be well enough, but that a grass green dress with trimmings all the colors of the rainbow, would be sufficient to put an impressionistic painter's teeth on edge.

But not so fast. A green field is never a mass of solid color. There is always a delicate bloom of gray, purple, or yellow or all three on the green. The gorgeous blossoms are not so many bits of primary colors. The subtile gradations in tints, the delicate harmony of tones—these are what please. Contrast, even quite sharp if it be not too violent, is also attractive, but a certain amount of perspective is essential to get the best effect. The manufacturers of dress goods have succeeded, past all previous belief, in reducing all the glories of coloring to all wool at so much a yard, but beyond this their power ceases. It is the dressmaker upon whose conscience the color blind, or color insensible woman must, in the end, depend. She may not know better than to order a grass green frock with garnitures of artificial old fashioned garden posies, but the dressmaker who expatiates upon the superior loveliness of a sage green gown with embroideries that introduce all the colors, but toned down to a perfect harmony as in some of the oriental handiwork, will have won a great victory, and saved to herself the credit for making Mrs. So and So a gown that is something for artists to rave over, and even men to rhapsodize about.

There never was a dressmaker, of course, who did not patiently wade through books about color, one of those that deals in details, monstrous long and wise. Orange and from that to blue, and back to white, each and every possible color and shade of it is taken up in turn, and the truth told with regard to its proper and improper combination with every other color and shade. But you find it impossible to remember the statistical observations. So do I. So does everybody. We shall do

better to keep our eyes open and observe. Study the pictures of the painters who are noted for their superior coloring, for one thing. Ask ourselves questions about toilets that we see everywhere, for another thing. Try the effect of certain colors alone and in combination against certain faces, for another thing. Don't you remember holding the butter-cup under some schoolmate friend's chin years ago, to see if she "liked butter?" Don't you remember the glow the buttercup yellow threw upon the skin? It might not be so becoming to her now, if she had eaten fried foods and taken no exercise these many years.

It helps out one's success to remember that many colors, that cannot be worn becomingly close up about the face in a high necked dress, are becoming enough in a low necked gown. Shades that are becoming by daylight, may not be so by artificial light, and vice-versa. This is the reason why the careful shopper selects the colors for her evening finery in the "evening silk room" that is a feature of all leading dry goods shops, a room in which only artificial light is furnished.

It is not even safe to match odd colors by daylight alone, if they are also to be worn in the evening, as shades that are often pretty together in the sunlight, are ready to "swear" at each other, as the French have it, by gas light.

There is a wonderful scene of proportion observed by nature in her color arrangement, riotous as it sometimes seems. The sharp contrasts that she sanctions, are shown, it must be remembered, subject to the softening influences of perspective and environment. A jonquil with its vivid yellow petals and green stem has a whorl of a harmonizing shade between the colors to blend them.

If the daffodil yellow bodice above the leaf green skirt is not agreeable to contemplate, try introducing yellow in jewels or tapestry needlework upon the green gown.

Bright colors are seldom becoming in the mass, except to pretty children, or when the surroundings can be arranged with special reference to the toilet, but they may be introduced as accenting notes. The delicate maiden who figures in story books, "clad in a plain gray frock relieved by a single glowing damask rose," is not unknown in real life, and a pretty picture she looks, providing she has the clear skin and rose tinted cheeks that look well in neutral tints.

But why the elderly woman who has lost from her cheeks and from her hair, all the color they ever had and from whose eyes the sparkle of youth has departed, should array herself in gray, is a disheartening mystery. She of all others requires the soft warm tints of rich crimsons and prune russet and plum shades, those that are so successfully dyed, that they seem to have a bloom over them like that on the velvety petal of a deep jacqueminot rose. As one grown older too, she looks best, not in the simple colors and plain fabrics, but in those with slightly roughed surfaces, and "invisible" combinations of colors, as in the *miroir* velvets, the shot and ombré silks, and the very fine mixtures in cloths.

"The too stout figure by the judicious choice of colors and combinations of contrasting shades, may manage to appear like a willowy girl," writes an artist, and, while we may question the exact truth of his enthusiastic utterance, it is unquestionably correct in principle.

It is most creditable to fashion, the despot, that she is becoming more and even more liberal. She no longer sets the seal of her approval upon any one color or combination; and, while smiling benevolently upon a variety of colors, she approves more and more of colors as well as designs that are becoming. You may make up *bleuet* with equanimity for the youthful person's house bodice, because her hair is glossy and brown, and her cheeks are wild roses, her eyes like a deer's, and her skin like a baby's, but defend me who have colorless straw hair and dull blue eyes, a muddy skin and no color in it, save

about the nose, from wearing *bleuet*, shell-pink, olive, or any of the other colors from ècru to majenta, in which I shall be equally a fright.

There is a medium bright shade of green with considerable depth to the color, in which I look surprisingly well, and there is another shade of brown, a warm deep rich brown with gold lights in it, which also reduces my hopeless ugliness to its lowest terms. See that I am advised about accepting them, if you would save your gowns from losing all their credit through being most unbecoming to me.

Black and white in combination are generally becoming to all European races, say artists, the fair skin forming a neutral tint between the two. Creamery white is becoming to nearly all people, save to the sallow woman under strong daylight. Where there is too little color in the eyes and hair and cheeks, an all white toilet may be saved from failure by the addition of becoming color in bands and bows.

The florid, blowzy complexion looks best in clear black, with a creamy tint, placed between the neck and the dress to soften the contrast. The same thing is true of all colors; the late reign of the colored velvet stock to the contrary notwithstanding. A line of creamy white should come between the face and any decided color to make the latter most becoming.

Dark hair and fair skins take kindly to reds, and red is amazingly becoming to flaxen haired children and blondes of older growth, when the skin is fair and clear—not otherwise. A dull complexion needs lighting up, but do not set it in too great a glare of light. Very light and very dark shades are more becoming, as a general thing, than medium shades of any color. Swarthy and sallow skins may wear reds to advantage, if they are rich, not dull in color, and neutral shades with a bit of rich color here and there; but dull brown and dull greens, and the pale tint of blue and pink etc., never.

Reddish gold hair and gray or blue eyes look well

in rich warm browns, golden hair inclining toward flaxen, and very fair skins find greens with yellowish tones, peachy-purples, and purpling red plum shades becoming. Pale pink is exceedingly unbecoming to anyone who has not dark hair, a very pale skin, with a delicate bloom of pink in the cheeks. Pale blues and very light greens look well with delicate skins and light hair, *if* the eyes are not dull.

Complexions vary from person to person, literally infinitely, and no rule is iron clad. But this much is certain; all colors are not equally becoming. Charming toilets in themselves are often robbed of their effectiveness, because of their unbecoming color, and therefore the clever dressmaker who is looking out for all the credit to which she is entitled, will, as a matter of business, make herself a judge of the values of color. And as a matter of beauty, she can lay claim to her prowess in this direction upon a far higher plane than that of mere reputation's sake.

Style.

"STYLE" applied to the description of dress is a curiously elusive quality either to lay hold upon or to define.

A "stylish" garment describes one made in one of the fashions of the day, but, when the "style of the garment" is mentioned, we do not know, until we see the garment or hear it described, whether it is made in the style of yesterday or of last century. A dress may be "in style" so far as its cut and finish go, and yet not look "stylish" when it is worn, either because it is worn in the wrong way or by the wrong person, showing style to be not a simple but a compound product.

"A stylish woman" is said frequently of one dressed *a la mode*, and yet, in the next breath, some other woman is described as "good style" though she may not wear the latest fashions or the costliest material, and need not herself be beautiful.

The French word *chic* which is so glibly misused in in English, expresses, in the original, a good deal of what we mean by "style" in English, although *chic* is a substantive and we use it as an adjective. Comically enough *chic* in the original is a masculine noun, but whatever it may have had of righteous masculine applicability when the Lords of Creation wore brocades and real laces, in these days of black swallow-tail coats and trousers, *chic* is practically an exclusively feminine appelation. *Chic* means knack. It is the knack in getting up a toilet that shows itself in the ensemble, or the absence of it that makes or mars the style of the toilet.

"We say style," says an old writer, "of anything, in which form or matter is conceived to be, in however slight degree, expressive of taste and sentiment." And it is taste and sentiment more than costliness that go to the making of *style*—that intangible something, so hard to

locate and so much to be desired, because it is so much admired in woman's dress.

"Good style," that is, *really* good style—the best style—is a landmark. Just beyond its borders is that quagmire of loud and flashy fashion into which so many women tumble and flounder through trying to hit style and making a poor shot.

There is a certain breezy quality in the fashions of the day, allowable in the dress of buds and young society blossoms, that is fatal to the attire of older women. If the latter attempt to copy it, they are certain to make themselves ridiculous by calling attention to the stretch of their imagination between their ageing figures and faces, and their girlish clothes. A stretch so great that the connection becomes painfully attenuated.

On the other hand, it is perfectly possible for women even of three score and ten years to dress stylishly. It must be possible for others, because some elderly women already do both dress stylishly and look stylish. But it can be done only by clothing the dignity of years in clothes not only elegant (or at least fashionably modish and refined), but in fashions that have some dignity.

The era of the "New Woman" has in no way displaced the Old Woman-old in femininity, whatever her years. She is about, just as usual, asking in her search for help in the matter of clothes, of all her acquaintances, "*Who* is your dressmaker?" "*Is* she stylish, and *does* she fit well?" Vernacular for, are the gowns she makes a success.

What does it mean, this being "stylish?"

All dressmakers cut and fit and make by the newest designs, but everybody knows to her distress of mind, that only the minority of woman get safely into that haven of dress—"style." The woman who wishes she were stylish and knows she isn't, would like to know the reason why she is not; and the dressmaker who sees the ducats scampering into other tills than her

own, and fame making a mundane halo around other heads than hers, wishes she knew the reason.

Style is not a synonym for richness of apparel, for it is not possible to turn round without seeing two women of whom one may be said to be "stylish" and the other quite devoid of style, and, yet, the latter is more often than not the more expensively dressed.

Style isn't imitation. There are women galore whom one might dress up in duplicates of all the splendid clothes ever made, and they would still look dowdy and frumpy.

It is a good deal easier to tell what style isn't, than what it is. For one thing, though, it is a combination of qualities. The stylish woman not only has stylish clothes, (clothes made modishly, however inexpensively), but she wears them stylishly.

Personality is the real essence of style. "That which can contrive, which can design, must be a person," says Paley "These capacities constitute personality, for they imply consciousness of thought."

A dressmaker, almost any dressmaker, can learn to cut and to fit and sew a dress, and yet be almost as impersonal as an automaton, but the dressmaker who turns out a "creation," must herself be a person with contriving and designing faculties. and must have so keen a scent for discovering the leading traits of the women for whom she makes gowns, that she recognises them when she finds these leading characteristics, and knows how best to set them off with articles of dress.

Every connoisseur in gems knows that only a strikingly beautiful, brilliant, statuesque woman with fine coloring can wear diamonds. Upon the quiet little mouse of a woman; on the sallow, homely woman, they are like the glare of an electric light in showing up her facial shortcomings. Diamonds belong to the handsome woman, with flashes of wit to keep the sparkle of the stones company.

The handsomest materials made in the newest

fashions are by no means to be distributed hap-hazard among women, any more than should jewels. One woman looks well in one style, another in some other and quite different one.

To find out what style suits any particular woman, the woman herself must be studied. To one who never thought of the doctrine of fitness in connection with style in dress, it might seem a huge undertaking to root into the subject to such depths, but it is the route taken and followed by every prominent dressmaker.

It doesn't make any difference whether I am a Methodist or an atheist, an admirer of Howells or an apostle of romanticism, when it comes to selecting the color of my dress; the proper color or colors depend upon my complexion, and the lines of the dress should accord with my height and avoirdupois. But if I am a dashing young person who plays golf, and drives a four in hand, and dances the German with the leader, and gives dinners and goes to the opera, my style of dress, the style that would be perfectly correct for me would be totally bad style for the Sister of Charity. Her figure may be like mine, her coloring the same, but her mode of life is so different from mine, that the clothes in which I might be properly dressed and very effective, would be as incongruous in the slums as the Sisters correct toilet would be in the box seat of a coach.

By the same token, the pretty, trailing, clinging, charming gowns that are *tout au fait* upon the artist dreamer in her studio, she being young and lovely, would be in wretchedly bad style for me who am getting fat, and forty and not fair, and devoted to business and the hustling bustling walks of life.

Style has to do with the fashions that are in vogue; it has also a great deal to do with the skilful or unskilful way in which the reigning modes are adapted to the woman who is to wear them, and to her needs and requirements. It also depends a good deal upon the way in which a woman wears her clothes after they are made.

Some woman are not "stylish," dress them in what you will. They do not "carry" their clothes well. They do not carry themselves well, and their gowns look, however handsome in themselves, or however appropiate, as if they merely happened upon them and not as if they were designed for the woman who wear them. The dressmaker can do a great deal; but there is a point beyond which she fails, unless her efforts are supported by those of the woman for whom she designs.

A word to the wise is sometimes sufficient, and, if, when I am lamenting the while you struggle with the fit of my bodice, because "Mrs. Brown always looks so well in her clothes," you were to say Mrs. Brown carries off her clothes well, it might have a salutary effect upon me.

The "stylish" woman has a good poise. She stands well, and she walks well, and she carries her head well, and her clothes take on just the right swing. Put them upon the woman who shambles; the woman who stands on her heels instead of upon the balls of her feet; the woman who throws her abdomen and hips forward, and lets her chest sink in and her shoulders droop forward and her back flatten; and the style of the toilet is overshadowed by the lack of style in the woman herself.

If dressmakers called the attention of their customers not brutally to their deficiencies, but politely to the superiority of certain styles of dress for certain styles of figures, much might be gained in the way of satisfaction for the customer, and credit to the dressmaker.

The woman who is admired for her style in dressing, no matter what the time or the occassion, looks as if what she wears at that time and upon that occasion were thought out with especially reference to the time and the occasion and especially to her.

How many, many toilets are to be seen on every hand that look as if they were picked up hap-hazard, a piece at a time, at a ready made shop, or very often as if they were actually made an inch or two at a time; as

if the designer did not know how she was going to make the sleeves till she got the rest of the bodice done: as if the skirt were made in another mood, from quite another point of view the really stylish dress is thought out as a whole. It "hangs together" well; the "composition," as painters of pictures say, is good. It may be a morning dress for the street, simple as an untrimmed skirt and round waist of black crépon with a twist of ribbon about the waist and neck and wrists can make it, but it hangs just right as to skirt, fits just right as to bodice, is of a becoming color, and the lines suit the figure; it is fresh and wrinkled and unfrayed. Every detail accompanying it from gloves to delicate linen handkerchief is spick and span; the wearer walks as if she were an uncrowned queen, and three quarters of all the men and women who pass her say "awfully good style."

The very next woman is over-dressed in the morning in a toilet elaborate enough for an afternoon tea, she has a bad carriage, her hair is stringy, her gloves a little or a good deal soiled, her veil looks as if it had been put on in the dark, etc. etc. and she has the general air of having been left over from the day before.

The chances are that her dressmaker receives a good deal of the blame for the lack of "style" about this second woman, and not infrequently, she is a good deal to blame for having made up a street dress that is over done, and for having failed to so subtly impress her customer with the all-round character of style in dress that she is not a credit to her when the customer walks abroad.

The dressmaker who succeeds in giving to her gowns the coveted stamp of style, has her fortune in her grasp. Therefore, it is worth while for her to know all there is to know about the externals that contribute to style, and enough about the core of the matter, which is the wearer's own bearing and carriage and keen appeciation of detail, to coax these up to the

standard necessary to set off properly the dressmaker's successful designs.

Study materials and study designs with a view to adapting one to the other. Study the woman her face, her figure, her complexion, and her needs in dress—in the light of the position she fills in society. Then, having gotten a fair picture of what the ensemble should be, make the details agree with it, never loosing sight of the fact that the stylish dress looks as if had been "composed" as a whole, not collected in fragments and fastened together till there was enough of it to cover the woman.

And, to top off with, the stylish dress must be carried off with a stylish air, and this depends upon the woman who wears it. Some women are hopeless, so far as style goes. Others are a great success within themselves. Others are malleable material and susceptible to the clever dressmaker's missionary efforts. Be a missionary.

How to Select Clothes.

"OH, dear! What *shall* I get for a dress?"

Poor dressmaker! As if she did not earn her money hard enough in dressmaking, she is expected to have a wealth of suggestions always on draught about selecting the materials as well as the fashions for making them up. And, yet, who is so well equipped as the dressmaker or who should be so well equipped as she to give just this information? It is for her advantage, moreover, to do so, even at the expense of the extra time required. It helps in securing for her the best possible materials to work with, and thus increases many fold her opportunities to turn out work that will do her credit. The growing custom, already referred to, among dressmakers, of shopping, even of importing for their customers, proves that many dressmakers have already found out the advantages of designing their gowns as far back as the materials themselves.

But it presupposes no small amount of knowledge on the part of the dressmaker, to expect her to be infallible in planning every gown she makes to perfection, beginning with its very beginning.

The fashion chronicler does not need to be nearly so wise as the dressmaker. The former tells what the fashions are—all of them. The dressmaker must needs know the virtues of every design, and enough to guard against bringing out the possible vices of the style by placing it where it does not belong. The customer must judge of the limit of expense for her order, but beyond this no one should be better able than the dressmaker to say just what the price named will do, when spent to the best advantage. It would seem with the great variety of materials and styles for making ever at hand, that it should be an easy matter to suit every body to a T. So it would, if Nature had gotten round

to moulding every woman in perfect form, with perfect coloring. But she hasn't. The perfect woman, physically speaking, does exist, but she is rare. Considering how rare she is, the dress designers pay altogether too much attention to her.

Most women, measured by an ideal standard of beauty, are too tall or too thin; too short or too stout; they stand badly; they walk badly; or they have spoiled their complexions by hook or by crook; something is sure to be wrong. The dressmaker's art is to cover these defects so far as possible to draw attention away from defects toward the good points of the figure.

The ideal woman can wear anything from a Greek chiton, to a Knickerbocker bicycle dress, and look divine in it. But with very few exceptions allowed for the perfect woman, designs must be adapted before they can be adopted to advantage. Fashion plates are drawn tall and divinely upon divinely fair women; to show the proper proportions to be observed in the designs themselves, according to the mind of the designing artist—speaking now of designs that are good enough to be entitled to consideration by elegantly dressed woman. Some designs are hopelessly bad at the beginning, and the dressmaker who is worthy of her price, should know these at a glance and eschew them.

Designs, however good in themselves, are not meant to be slavishly copied. A woman six feet tall may wear a dress skirt eight or ten yards wide at the bottom, but the dumpy little Frau who is as broad as she is long will be a ridiculous figure in the same enormous sweep of skirt.

The Parisian dressmaker refuses to make sleeves for short, stout women of the width of the sleeves she makes for tall, thin women; more than this she does not believe in giving the short, stout woman gowns modeled on the same lines as those for tall, thin women. She designs something especially for the roly-poly

body.

"Make Madam a long coat of this material? Oh no, Madam has not length of limb enough for a coat!" "A cape?" you suggest meekly, "Worse and worse;" says La Parisienne in effect if not in so many words, and she goes on to explain that Madam's figure is too short for a cape, but that she is well formed, and a close fitting jacket which will display the symmetry of her figure, is the proper garment for her.

In America somebody sees a good looking dress for the ideal woman, and in 99 times out of 100 dresses are made from it in all sizes from 32 to 44 inch bust measure! Once in a while the style is such, that by enlarging or reducing the pattern and keeping the proportions the same as in the original, the dress is becoming to large and small women: but in most cases the design, while all right for the little woman or for the large woman, is all wrong for the woman who is at the other extreme in size.

Paris dressmakers and the American dressmakers who have their trade turned into an art, make one style of sleeve for the woman whose arm is like a rail and quite another style for the arm shaped like a ham. But three-fourths of the home dressmakers, with too great confidence in the pictured fashions and too little in themselves, put the enormous leg of mutton or the elbow balloon or the skin tight sleeve, if that is in vogue, into all their dresses the season through, regardless of the size or shape of that forearm, or the effect of the sleeve upon the huge bust, or painfully thin shoulders, thinking only of the fascinating personage who wears those same sleeves in the fashion journal.

All praise to the journals. What should we do without them. They scour the world for ideas that dressmakers may sit at home and make use of them. But the dressmaker has her share of work to do. It is to study her patrons with just as much assiduity as the fashion chronicler studies the generality of designs.

Supposing the fashion chronicle does say that plaids are coming "in" again. They are never in fashion for the woman who weighs two hundred pounds.

V-shaped necks are never in style for the woman with a long thin face, *Et cetera ad in finitum.*

Boleros may come and blouses may go, but the princess style reigns forever for the stout woman. Details may be altered to accord with those in vogue, but the unbroken lines characteristic of the design, (the only style of gown which preserves intact that beautiful line on the stout figure from the arm to the ankles over the hip) are anchors of safety.

There is a fortune, not to mention the thanks of the community, awaiting the dressmaker who will make a specialty of designing and making dresses for the women who are too large, too small, and not well formed. A few dressmakers have this gift among their other gifts, and profit accordingly; and until none but the perfect woman presents herself for advice about her clothes, as well as to have dresses made, it will pay every dressmaker to know how best to overcome such deficiencies as there are to be overcome. Depend upon it, if they are not disguised, peculiarities of figure spoil the effect of the most stylish dress.

It is possible to bring a circle into the field of vision in such a way as to make it look like a line without any breadth. The superabundant flesh of the fat woman cannot be annihilated by the dressmaker, whatever can be done by means of dieting and Turkish baths and tramping. But it can be dressed in a way to direct attention away from it instead of toward it. Whatever makes one appear to be taller, makes her look more slender. Dresses for over stout and short women should be designed to attract the eyes of the beholder, up and down the figure, and not across it.

Belts that seem to cut the body in two, basques that appear to lengthen the bodice and make the lower part of the body shorter, horizontal and all foot trim-

mings, hip draperies, everything, in short, that assists in making the dress look expansive, including large plaids and large figures and very rough cloths, should be tabooed. Unbroken lines from neck to hem, trimmings that run up and down, and narrow stripes in dress materials, are especially successful adjuncts of the dress for the stout woman. For the short, fat arm a cuff that turns back draws attention to the arm; a turn down collar calls attention to the short neck; tucks in the skirt of a dress for a short figure, say as plainly as so many words, behold how much too long this skirt was for so short a wearer. Black and dark colors make the stout figure appear smaller, and "one piece" effects in dresses and outer garments should be cultivated. Two-third lengths in long coat bodices are disastrous, since they reduce apparent height.

The majority of women who are unpleasantly stout make the mistake of thinking that the tighter their clothes are the better they look. This is a preposterous idea, for it makes them appear, when it is carried into execution, as if they were tied up for the spit. The very stout woman may be so well proportioned and may carry herself so well, that her clothes do not need special manipulating in order to make them acceptable. But the average large woman carries herself badly, with rounding shoulders, and flattened back at the waist line, and, through long years of bad management of herself, her bust and abdomen are in a fair way to meet. The young woman who gets into this deplorable shape may undo the trouble by persistence, but the elderly woman is generally too indolent, too accustomed to her bad figure to be willing to make it over. The dressmaker's one hope, *then*, is to make a dress for such a figure that will not tell the whole truth with regard to its inartistic outlines.

The dress that has an unbroken line from under the arm to the hem is the best choice, and the under arm form should be close fitting; if the shoulders are very

rounding at the back, there will be an unlovely broken backed effect between them in a plain waist. Accordingly the existing fashions in trimming should be adapted to cover that line where the back curves sharply above the corsets from long habit of settling into them and stooping.

The bodice in front should be a trifle loose fitting between the bust and abdomen, the fulness serving to hide the real hollow there, suggesting a valley between two mountains. If the fulness cannot be draped a trifle, as in the present style of blouse front which on a stout woman looks well between two close fitting jacket fronts cut quite narrow, it can be drawn in plaits, not too tightly, to a point on the abdomen, and seemingly be held there by a girdle coming merely from the under arm forms.

Sleeves must not be so large as to make the width of the figure enormous, but should be loose enough to conceal the over grown arm. Skirts should be full enough to hang easily, whatever the style, and should be extra long in front so that under no conditions will the skirt poke up in front.

The thin woman's best course is in general terms to pursue just the opposite plan to that followed in the dress of the stout woman. Fluffy fashions are becoming to her, shirrings, puffings, floating ends, U-shaped necks instead of V-shaped ones if they must be low, clouds of tulle, and all manner of devices to soften the too angular outlines of face and figure. Trimmings should go across the dress, not up and down. Yokes and girdles, and foot trimmings that seem to reduce the height, loose jacket fronts if any on bodices, full round waists where possible, plaids, and never stripes unless made up horizontally—these, are some of the details that the skilful dressmaker will observe.

Sleek, smooth, cold, plain surfaced satins are very trying to the thin, colorless woman; and "nigger head" materials, large figured, high colored brocades make

the big woman look bigger and blowzier.

Nothing but complete metamorphosis will make a beautiful woman out of a homely one, and this is beyond the province of even the dressmaker, but she has it within her power to make a fright of a really very good looking woman, or to make a really well dressed and attractive picture of a woman to whom nature has not been kind.

The dressmaker who makes up her mind to include the latter feat among her specialties is certain to have half the feminine world at her feet.

Economy.

THE best is the cheapest. The saying is so trite that it has lost some of its force. Everybody believes it, but a great many people make bold to disregard it, because they find so many seeming exceptions to the rule. The truth is, these are not exceptions—the instances where the best does not prove to be the cheapest. They are the cases merely where the best is not the highest priced. A great many people make the mistake of thinking first class quality and expensiveness are identical. Good grades cost more than poor ones. but fancy prices are very often asked, not because the quality is super excellent, but because the pattern is novel.

The best *is* the cheapest, all things taken into consideration. One would not buy the best quality of any goods for a stage dress to wear one night, because the grade that would answer every purpose for the case in hand, would not have to withstand wear, and something less valuable would look to all intents and purposes quite as well across the footlights. But when it comes to buying clothes that are to be subjected to close scrutiny and continued wear, it pays to get the best quality, whether it be flannel or cloth of gold.

The old fashioned distinction between a "best dress" and one of every day wear, has passed away with the introduction of the custom of having a special dress for many special uses,—calling, wheeling, dining, the theatre, shopping, etc., etc. The woman who lives in the country and does her own housework and has one dress a year which she must put on every time she puts on her bonnet and leaves her own front door, still speaks of her "best dress," but the chances are that even her daughter belongs to a woman's club, and is in other ways advanced enough to divide her wardrobe up

into at least half a dozen dresses; instead of two. Each one of these half dozen is distinctive in style, however unpretentious the style is; or it should be, if she wishes to make any pretention to being well dressed.

It is a mistake to have half a dozen dresses alike, save for a possible difference in color, or the adjustment of the trimming. Yet very many women do this who do not know better, and dressmakers somewhere aid and abet them. The result is a number of cheap materials, cheaply made, no one of the dresses looking anything but commonplace.

The clever woman, whether she be the poor country girl or the rich country girl or a city woman, knows better than this. She has one street dress; one dress that is, that will answer to wear on the street whether to shop or to church, to travel in or to make an informal call in. This dress she has as good as she can get; the style is not pronounced enough to become known when it has been once worn, but the cloth is of the best, and the workmanship and style are A–1 of the kind.

Then the clever woman who is trying to economise, having gotten her one good street dress for the season, takes care of it. She does not loll about the house in it. When she gets home, off comes the dress with its perfect fitting bodice that will not stand lounging, and on goes a house dress. Neither does she wear her stylish street dress with its elegantly hung and unwrinkled skirt to the theatre to sit in for several hours. She puts on a skirt that will stand wrinkling, and a fancy waist into which she can settle without ruining it.

How does the way a woman wears her clothes, after she gets them, concern the dressmaker? In several ways. It is for the best interests of a dressmaker that the people for whom she makes dresses—from herself to her least valuable customer—shall be as well dressed as possible. The woman who is always correctly dressed is a great credit to the dressmaker, and the woman who dresses well on a little money greatest of all. Many women know no better than to add one poor character-

less dress after another to their poor wardrobes, and always, as a result, "look just the same no matter what they have on." The dressmaker can prevent this if she will educate her customers, and it is for her advantage to do so.

No amount of skilful manœuvring will make fifty dollars do the work of a hundred, if both sums are spent to advantage, but the difference between what fifty dollars will do in the hands of a shrewd buyer and clever planner, and what it does when spent by a careless purchaser who does not know a good thing when she sees it, is hardly to be overestimated.

There are bargains and bargains. The kind of bargains that secure 12½ cent goods for 12 cents, saving half a cent a piece on something by spending hours of time, and a fountain of strength, isn't worthy of anybody but a drummer buying by the hundred thousands, The "mark-downs" of pronounced styles, when the styles are passing out of fashion and are so pronounced as to look old fashioned as soon as made up, is another type of alleged bargains that should be passed by. The good dressmaker aims at distinction in all she makes. She should not therefore when shopping or giving advice to shoppers defeat this object. The woman of limited means who must wear any dress that she has for a long time, should be advised to get something comparatively inconspicuous, letting its elegance of fit, finish, and general "air" make up for its lack of ultra modishness. Only the women who can have several dresses at once and throw them aside as aoon as the pronounced style passes, should be advised to get extravagantly big patterns, markedly peculiar combinations, etc.

It pays to buy the best linings, also to have the best whalebones, the best sewing silks, etc., or two gowns, of which one is to be subjected to hard wear, say, for a school teacher's working dress, and the other is to be reserved for visiting and special occasions, the better material should be put into the dress that is to be worn most.

It is the dressmaker s province to know shams from goods that are worth while, and, if she does, she will ward off on the part of her customers, the purchase of goods which she knows are merely "dressed" to look like something they are not. The dress goods in both wool and silk that would deceive almost manufacturers themselves when on the counters, but which look as if they had been passed through fire and water when they have been worn a few times, are a cross to the dressmaker, for upon them her happiest efforts are thrown away. They have no "body," and look cheap and poor when they have been worn a little while.

There are real bargins to be had by the keen eyed shopper, if she knows what she wants, and be not cajoled into taking something she does not want because it is marked "below cost." Good boots with a soiled sole and a button or two missing are good bargains, *if* they are good boots, but the truly economical person no more thinks of buying boots or gloves or silk, unless they are guaranteed by a reputable dealer's name, than she thinks of flying in the face of Providence in any other direction.

Women are themselves to blame for the trash in the market, because of their illogical determination to have something for nothing, and, when women become wise enough to sort the good values from the poor ones and buy only the latter, there will not be so much shoddy material on every hand, to hamper their selections.

Some good goods are sold cheap, some cheap things are no good, and some goods are never cheap.

Trimming is meant to be ornamental garnitures, and poor trimming is not only an offense to the cultivated taste, but it cheapens the best dress, and makes the poor dress pitiful. For economy's sake, too, as well as for the sake of style, it is better to put the limited amount—where it is limited—that can be afforded for a dress, into the material first, spending enough, if it takes the entire sum to do so, to insure the linings and outside dress stuff being of sufficiently good grade to

look well. One good dress clothes its wearer better than any number of commonplace ones.

A low priced creamy cashmere may be ecomical for a Greek evening gown, but a black one tailor made from the same grade would be rank extravagance, costing the value of all the findings and making, to no end but a poor dress at best.

Low priced buttons that look well enough to be acceptable to the eye, may be economical, but a cheap quality of skirt binding is most extravagant, because of the short time it wears and the time it takes to replace it. The "short length" that is sold at a reduction in price is an economical purchase, if it fills a need, but not if it be bought merely because it is cheap. It is not economy to buy enough extra of the original material to have some left over, because when, later on, the new material is added, it makes the parts of the dress that are still retained look older than they really are.

It is economical to have good judgment and to use it and good judgment increases with cultivation.

There is economical economy and extravagant economy; the economical economy does not mean going without, but "thrift, thrift Horatio."

Making-Over.

TO make over or not to make over? This is a question dressmakers are forever revolving in their minds. Does it pay? Yes and no. It pays if one has talent for re-making, and takes the stand of asking as much for making a whole dress out of old stuff as from new material, charging for "fixing over" in proportion to the time consumed.

There are always women who must economise who find themselves with good material on hand, so good that if it be skilfully worked over, it makes them better dressed than they could be in any new material they feel able to buy. A good many of these woman are willing to pay fair prices for making over the old things, providing taste and ingenuity and style are combined in the process.

There are dressmakers in New York who almost confine their work to making over, and who make handsome incomes from so doing. One woman in particular, formerly with one of the largest and most fashionably patronized dressmaking establishments, decided to make a specialty of making over and go into business for herself, because there was a constant fire of queries from the customers of the place where she formerly was, for the address of some one who would take old materials still good and revamp them into stylish up-to-date frocks, or parts of frocks.

This dressmaker asks her customers to send to her all of whatever they have on hand that they wish made over; she looks it over and makes an appointment for an interview, in which she says. "With this I can do so and so; that I can do nothing with; this, if you will spend so much on it, I can make into such and such a thing. The work will cost such and such a sum." And so on.

She employs apprentices who save her time in ripping and pressing; she has the materials cleansed if

necessary but she prefers if possible to turn them, for most light materials cleansed by any process lose their original "dressing," and soil next time much more quickly than when new. She has a genius for making effective things, this woman. She takes the pale pink silk of the faded party frock, and the black mousseline de soie of the skirt that is frayed and passé about the bottom. The latter she steams free from wrinkles and more crêpe like than ever, and has it accordion plaited, and from the combination produces a theatre bodice that is a dream, etc., etc.

The bodice linings of good fitting waists are often perfectly good when the outside is worn out, needing perhaps merely to be cleaned about the neck and wrists, have some new bones or bone casing, etc. While it would not pay to put them into heavy new cloth bodices, they can be utilized with comparatively little work for the foundations of more or less fancy waists for house or evening wear, the wear on which is slight.

Most silk is ruined when re-dyed. Light silk better be turned and veiled with some thin material. Black silks, sponged with strong black tea and some ammonia come out wonderfully well if they are rolled when damp very smoothly and very tightly upon a smooth round stick like a Holland shade roller, and have the last edge kept in place by a flat wide tape wound round and round, the stick and its load being stood away to dry. Do not iron the silk. If greasy in spots but otherwise clean, sponge all over with naptha (in a fireless room), and hang in the air to get rid of the odor.

Some all wool fabrics dye very well indeed when ripped apart. The fairy tales about what can be done in dying whole are not worthy of credence. The wool shrinks, the lining does not and the latter, when cotton, remains near its original color, When the waist is put on, the strain upon all the seams makes them show white, and the dress is good for nothing.

Lace that is not rusty but wrinkled can be steamed to look like new over the top of a wide mouthed pot of

boiling water. Crape ditto. Velvet requires two operators; one to hold it out over the steam, perfectly straight as the least bend mars the velvet, the other with a soft velvet brush to brush *against* the nap to assist the steam in raising it where it has become crushed.

It is better when possible to make one new dress of two old ones and buy one new one outright, than to spend the cost of the new one in buying new goods to put with the old, and have in the end but two partially worn gowns.

Where it is necessary to buy new goods for the old dress, considerable care must be exercised to select something that will make the old goods look better instead of worse. The new texture should be generally of a different material, that is to say, new velvet looks better with old silk than new silk does. Black cloth that has been worn sometime looks better made over, if possible, with some color than with new black goods; if it is desirable to have the dress still all black, then buy the same color of black, and change the texture, putting rough cloth with smooth, etc. Black chiffon makes a partially worn dull black cloth lifeless and homely. Jet, on the other hand, does something to enliven the black material.

It is a good deal easier to put a contrasting color or a different shade of the same color with partially worn colored goods, than to match the color exactly; where it is possible to do the latter, the new color is apt to make the old one look faded beside it. Where other shades or colors are selected, have them either in sharp contrast or harmonizing. Some sets of shades, as blue-greens for instance with yellow-greens, are very ugly together.

The light coachman's drab dress that, however carefully cleaned, would soil again too soon to make it worth while to remake by itself, may be used with fetching effect under a darker broadcloth that is perforated in "pinking" pattern, or in such a way that the light cloth shows as a simulated under-skirt, under

slashed sleeves, as a waistcoat, etc. But, if the drab in the cleansing process has lost its brownish tinge, do not make it up with darker brown, since that will merely make the light cloth look faded. Use a warm green or warm mahogany red-something to give a little color by reflection.

The skirts of a couple of seasons ago, even those of one year back, are hopeless as skirts to-day, but a collection of old skirts in clever hands will make an assortment of waists which a couple of new black skirts will make into several useful and attractive dresses.

A challie that has lost its first bloom is a good contribution to the heathen's missionary barrel, but a real camel's hair that was lovely when new and light but is now soiled or faded, can be dyed black to look like new.

Trimmings of the nature of passementeries, when not worn but which look gray and old, can often be made to take on a new lease of life merely by sponging them thoroughly on both sides with clear black tea and ammonia. Buttons of some kinds take kindly to a generous bath of soapy warm ammonia water, and a polishing when dry with a bit of chamois. Others, as of cut steel, need to be polished with a brush and steel polishing powder. Jet which gets very dusty from usage, when it is not feasible to wash it or sponge it, can be brushed clean with a soft hat brush. Silk passementeries, by the way, should never be brushed, but always sponged clean with a sponge that is merely damp and not wet. Tell customers this when their passementeries are new.

The fashions of the present day are especially complaisant so far as making over goes, the great latitude allowed in the decoration of bodices making it possible to shorten old basques into round waists, make too short waists in basque bodices by adding a gored piece or several gored basque forms below the waist. Bodices too tight across the bust may be enlarged under loose blouse fronts. Sleeves that are tight or in old style may be slashed to admit puffs, the biggest that ever were seen; indeed there is no portion of a bodice, seem-

ingly, which may not be revamped to suit the style, one style or another, by adding a yoke, a collarette, a *ceinture*,—some design of fashion that, in the case in hand, will prove to be both ornamental and useful.

The dressmaker who will make over, and make over to the best advantage and will make announcement of the fact, draws at once to her doors a deal of custom that is lying about waiting for some body to turn foster mother to it.

That it pays is proved by the money returns made to those who have cleverly seized upon this unending branch of dressmaking, either by itself, or in connection with their regular work in new materials.

Whenever and wherever two women gather together, the dressmaker who is "a genius in making over old things" is lauded to the skies, if either one of the women has succeeded in finding her. Patronage flows toward the dressmaker who can and will make over and who does it well, because she is a rarity and because "making over" is an ever present burden of the feminine mind.

Dress Reform.

SHALL the dressmaker who aspires to be a successful fashionable dressmaker, bother her head about dress reform?

She can't avoid the subject.

All modern dress is reformed. There was never a time since feminine dress became a complex matter of several garments, when women dressed at once so hygienically and charmingly as to-day. The most ultra-fashionable woman, who does not know that she has a suspicion of sympathy with dress reformers, is wearing more or less reformed dress. She is wearing reformed, or improved—perhaps improved is the better word—underwear, not because she wouldn't rather die than be unfashionable, and so not because of hygienic reasons, but because her dressmaker and tailor advise her that her dresses will fit much better over smooth-fitting under-garments than over the old fashioned sort loaded with trimming and sweeping with fulness. The latter mode smothered in ruffles and other furbelows is preserved for her negligeè chamber robes.

The fact that French dressmakers, sensitive to the inartistic effect of horsehair stiffened silk skirts, decided not to use the horsehair in thin stuffs, has a great deal more to do with heavy skirts going out of fashion than all the preachments of all the physicians, and professional reformers. Fashion, not preaching is wheeling hygienic dress into line.

The prettiest dress and the most fetching dress today has nothing inimicable to health about it. And the increasing custom of having a number of radically different uses. is introducing the sensible as well as artistic and fashionable habit of making each one the best possible dress for the occasion in question.

There are a number of professional dress reformers in this country and in England who advocate peculiar

forms of dress, but the only ones that have any decided following are those that look quite like the dresses worn by the most fashionable women, but which follow more or less closely the outlines of the princess dress in effect or principle.

Any dressmaker who understands her business can make any "reform" dress that she is asked to make, without any cross to her conscience or offence to fashion. In the large cities there are dressmakers reaping large incomes by advertising that they will design artistic dresses and make reform dresses after the model of this that or the other of the Professional dress reformers.

It is a good stroke of business to make and to make attractive any dress one is requested to make. The only thing to avoid is turning out a dress that will not do one credit. The few dressmakers who were asked to make the knickerbocker and bloomer costumes shown at the World's Fair by the dress reformers in convention there, claimed great credit for their prowess, but tailors all over the country have made riding habit trousers for years and are making knickerbockers now by the hundreds.

Bicycling is introducing a style of dress for special wear which reformers have been decades trying in vain to make popular for all occasions. It is a foregone conclusion that women are not going into trousers ever save for horseback riding, and then only under habit skirts. They are too hideous. The trend is all in favor however of "knickers" for wheeling, and just as strongly as ever in the world, in favor of trailing lovely draped trained creations for the drawing room and boudoir.

It does behove every dressmaker to master the intricacies of every possible style of dress that she can be called upon to make, if she wishes to hold all her trade, and get more. In the city, the tailor not the dressmaker, is asked to make the bicycle suit, but in the smaller places where "ladies' tailors" are unknown quantities, the dressmaker must be tailor and dressmaker in one.

Personally, she might not be willing to wear knickerbockers or ride a bicycle, though she were paid a fortune for it, but it is not good business to refuse to make them or not to know how to make them for customers who wish this style of dress. The book seller does not refuse to sell me a Methodist hymnal because he happens to be a Unitarian, that is he doesn't if he is a shrewd business man. He undertakes to cater to the buyers of books, not to foist his creed upon any one.

The dressmaker cannot be too catholic in her ability. And if she knows the foundations of her trade thoroughly, and has had the good taste and good sense to master the art of it, there is nothing she need fear to undertake to make, from a gymnasium dress with divided skirt, to skirt hidden or revealed knickerbockers for athletic sports, or gowns for Queen Victoria's drawing room.

In Conclusion.

THE American dressmaker is competing with the world. There are no women in the world to-day paying so much attention to dress and spending so much money for it as the American women. There is no reason in the world why they should not patronize dressmakers among their own countrywomen, providing the American dressmakers will dress them as effectively as foreigners at the same prices.

It is a mistake to suppose that all foreign made clothes are of the first order. There are poor dressmakers on both sides of the water. But the best dressmakers in the world, from the stand point of feminine adornment, are the leading French dressmakers.

They smile, as well as they may, at the American dressmakers' wild and unending chase for a new system of cutting, ever and forever a new cutting system. The French are working to-day as they have worked for the last five hundred years, so far as methods are concerned, but they have not done studying.

It is a liberal education in the art of dressmaking to see a French dress designer working over any portion of a new design. The material is considered as tenderly as if it were precious, though it may be but an ordinary fabric. And the design for making it is fitted to the fabric long, long before the dressmaker has a chance to fit it to the human figure.

If the material is to be a rich brocade and there are to be organ plaits, they are measured and guaged and trial plaits are worked upon, until it has been proved that if an inch narrower or an inch wider, the plait would break in walking. Only then are the plaits declared perfect.

This is a sample of the way the French have built up their reputation, of the way they are still at work upon it. They love dress and they do it credit.

To the American dressmaker who is content to make the cheap dresses and have her customers import their high priced gowns, there is nothing to be said. But the native dressmaker who aspires to having her work and her profession valued in the front rank, must study to make dresses well, yes; but to make them well by making them stylish and beautiful at the same time.

It means study; it means recognizing the importance of small things when the small things are important; it means fidelity to detail, and an appreciative eye for effects. It means as constant work and thought as the members of other professions give to their work. The author is never done studying human nature; the lawyer studies law as long as he lives; the musician studies his life through; even the base ball player is forever on the look out for a chance to improve his playing.

The dressmaker in this country, taking her work and not theories for a criterion, has too often thought she had learned all there was to know when she finished her apprenticeship.

There is no such thing as finished up education of any kind. So long as fashions change, and fabrics change, and no two women are born into the world alike, there is constant opportunity to study, if the dressmaker means to raise her trade to an art. And there is not only constant opportunity, but constant need to study.

It doesn't seem worth while to you?

Then you are the dressmaker who has mistaken her calling, and the sooner you renounce the business of dressmaking and turn dentist or cook or actress or nun or whatever you have a taste for, the better for you and the better for your present profession.

Dressmakers who adorn their profession are all round clever and able women, artists quite as much as the painters who make pictures on canvas, and yet there is no calling in the country that is much more looked down upon. Who is going to raise it to

its proper dignity? The dressmakers themselves. They must work for themselves and for each other. Co-operation is the password of the age. Yet everybody has co-operated but dressmakers. Why should they not work together for their mutual advancement ?

Every dressmaker cannot go to Paris, or even to New York. Why might there not be in every community a dressmakers' club, from which at least one delegate every season should visit the fashion centres, and go back to her club associates with a head full of new ideas, just as delegates from other clubs go and return thus, why should there not be a national organization of the local clubs, which should meet semi annually and discuss new goods and new styles, the best patterns, and the thousand and one details of the art of dressmaking from plaitings to prices? Every woman who is worthy of her calling evolves in the course of her work certain original ways of doing things that are excellent. An exchange of ideas, far from rendering any individual poorer, would make her richer. She still has the use of her own discoveries and gains the hundreds contributed by hundreds of others.

American women, save in small groups of exceptions here and there, are still a pretty badly dressed lot, American dressmakers fail by long odds to receive the credit they may have if they will work for it. It is not necessary for them to work any harder with their hands. indeed it is possible for them to do better work and not work so hard with their hands.

But they must work harder with their heads. They must see more and hear more, and think a great deal more.

When the American dressmaker understands the possibilities of her profession and grasps them, she will have no equal. She can cater to the tastes of the most elegant American women as deftly and fascinatingly as French women—if she will.

Perception, Perseverance, and—PERSEVERANCE.
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